

CRICKET

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Preface

I NEED offer no apology, in these days of continuous progress and keen public interest in manly sports, for the production of a practical Book of Cricket in handy popular form. No outdoor game has taken firmer hold upon the heart and manhood of England. Within living memory top-hats and braces have given place to the freedom of flannels, and uncertain wickets to a perfect pitch, but in all essentials the grand old game retains its sterling character.

In these pages will be found up-to-date hints on how to play cricket, by those who have had the fullest possible experience of its practice and requirements in the field.

It gives me genuine pleasure and satisfaction to be associated in this congenial task with experts of world-wide reputation, whose comradeship I value and enjoy.

G. L. JESSOP.

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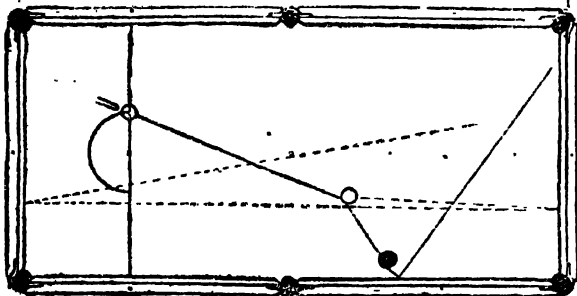
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Cricket Book

CHAPTER I

On Training for Cricket

By C. B. FRY

How Personal Error tells.

IT is usually regarded as one of the advantages of cricket that the game requires no special training. But it is a great mistake to suppose that a man can be at his best either as a batsman, a bowler, or a fielder unless he is thoroughly well, and in thoroughly good condition.

In point of fact, as far as regards batting, there is no game where being just a little bit "out of gear" makes more difference to you. However skilful a batsman you are, however many strokes you are master of, you can do little good if your eye is out of its best working order. The whole of your skill, the power to use your strokes effectively, depends upon your being able to time the ball accurately; and accurate timing of the ball depends upon your brain, eye, and hand working together in perfect harmony.

The Batsman out of Gear.

The moment you develop anything in the shape of extra "personal error," you become conscious of the fact in several ways. In the first place, you find you cannot see the ball as well: it appears smaller to you, and its flight less distinct. And, in the second place, you find you cannot make your bat do what you desire. Your

Importance of General Training

eye tells your brain when and how to hit the ball, and in accordance your brain sends the message on to your arms and hands; then the hitch occurs, these members do not give the immediate and exact obedience that is required. Result, a bad stroke.

Fitness in the Field.

In fielding and bowling the effects of being "out of gear" are not quite so manifest. The batsman who makes a mistake usually loses his wicket, and is thoroughly impressed by the accident; the fielder who fumbles the ball, or is slow to get down to it, is conscious of his error, but not in the same degree. But there is a vast difference between the fit and the unfit fielder. Missing catches, like making bad strokes, is often the result of "personal error."

Importance of General Training.

Cricket, then, requires no special training beyond what you may gain in the actual playing of the game; but it does require the general training upon which fine health and ordinary good condition depend. To gain and keep this state of fitness a man absolutely must lead a regular and temperate life, and eschew late hours, and every sort of excess in food and drink.

Walking is First-rate Exercise.

A man who, in the ordinary sense of the term, is "out of condition" may work himself fit by various means. As a fundamental exercise, however, there is nothing to beat straightforward prosaic walking. The value of regular walking is now fully recognised in all departments of athletics: boxer, sprinter, oarsman are all subjected to their daily "grind."

In the cricketer's case there is no need to make walking exercise too much of a "grind"; but a training walk must be more than a mere stroll. Still, for a man

Muscle Culture and Development

thoroughly out of condition I should prescribe a preliminary course of walking exercise extending over three weeks or a month—say, three five-mile walks at a pace of four miles an hour, and one ten-mile walk at a slower pace each week.

Such walking is perhaps rather hard work at first, but it provides the quickest means of getting into condition without risk of strain. It is amusing to hear that walking, though the most elementary form of exercise, is precisely the practice that trainers have most difficulty in commending to their pupils. Any one, however, who has never tried a systematic course of walking has no conception how fit it will make a man.

Muscle Culture and Development.

With regard to exercise for developing the muscles specially used in cricket, it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that what is required in cricket is not heavy strength, but quickness and elasticity. Consequently it is advisable to avoid all apparatus that involves slow straining muscular exertion.

Avoid Heavy Weights.

To train his muscles for heavy weight lifting is precisely what a cricketer ought not to do. If you use dumb-bells, be sure they are light; 2 lbs. each is quite heavy enough, and the same advice applies to Indian clubs.

The Better Way.

But I am inclined to think that the ordinary extension exercises and free gymnastics (without any apparatus or weights) as taught in the Army are better. Once you grasp that it is not so-called strength of muscle, but quickness and elasticity that you require in cricket, you are not likely to go far wrong. It is a most important point this.

Study Quickness of Foot

A Quaint Suggestion.

Probably the idea may amuse you, but I really believe that outside correct batting practice nothing* would be more conducive to the acquirement of skill in batting than cultivation of the art of step-dancing. Why? Simply because the fundamental requisites in batting are balance and quickness of foot.

Study Quickness of Foot and Balance.

To use your feet neatly and quickly in such a way as to be in the correct position for every stroke you make, is the great secret of good style: that, and perfection of balance. Very few cricketers thoroughly understand this, but it is, I think, incontestable. And, *mutatis mutandis*, I believe the statement holds also not only in games like tennis, rackets, and fives, but in boxing and fencing.

Kindred Games are Helpful.

These games, by the way, as well as boxing and fencing, are excellent adjuncts to cricket. Rackets teaches you to watch the ball and to be correct on your feet. Boxing and fencing promote balance, quickness, and harmony of hand and eye. All of them promote correctness in the disposition of your weight, and the transference of it from foot to foot.

I know of no surer way of improving your strokes at cricket than first of all to discover how each of them ought to be made, and then to think out how your other games or pursuits can assist you to attaining this correctness. For instance, a batsman who is at pains to master the correct play for the off-drive, might conquer his difficulties by practising in correct form the forehand stroke at rackets.

Value of Chamber Drill

Value of Chamber Drill.

It is remarkable how much a player can improve himself by simply practising strokes with a bat and no ball or bowler. But this is easily understood when you perceive that the actual correctness of a stroke, so far as the movement of the feet and of the arms is concerned, is entirely independent of the ball. To make a stroke with the correct action and to time the ball are two distinct things ; both are necessary in a match, and you can learn the second only with a ball bowled at you ; but the first you can certainly to some extent acquire by mere chamber drill.

Practice at the Swinging Ball.

It is also worth knowing that much may be done with a ball hanging by a cord from a beam or a tree. A little ingenuity renders practice at the swinging ball quite valuable.

CHAPTER II

Batting

BY G. L. JESSOP

Present-day Batting.

THE batsman in these days of perfect wickets has a great many more things to be thankful for than fell to the lot of his predecessors of some thirty or forty years ago. So easy has his task of run-making been made for him now, that one shudders to think of the fate that may befall his most unhappy of foes, the bowler, at the end of another double-decade.

Forty years ago shooters, and balls that rose above the batsman's head, were the rule and not the exception; to-day they are the exception and not the rule. In those days sheer pace was often sufficient to account for the downfall of a batsman, but nowadays the bowler finds, unless opposed to a batsman of the timid species, that on the improved wickets a great deal more is required of him.

Given an inexhaustible supply of patience and a capacity of playing with a straight bat, a batsman can defy all the artifices of a strong bowling side for a lengthened period, provided his sole object is to keep his wicket up and to run no risk. This method, useful as it may be, does not as a rule win matches in England; but it is of more value in Australia, where matches are played to a finish. Nothing is more unsatisfactory than to participate in a match when, from the character of the slow tactics indulged in, one is able to foresee a drawn game even at the end of the first day's play. With a little brighter method, and a determination to take more risks, one cannot but think that fewer games would be left unfinished.

Position when Batting

Need for Hard Practice and Good Coaching.

Batting is not to be thoroughly mastered except by dint of hard practice and good coaching—the former one is able to get anywhere, but the latter is not so easily obtainable.

A Straight Bat.

The first principle that is drummed into one's ears, almost from the cradle, is to play with a straight bat, although the most natural way is to play with a bat at a slight angle. Obviously if one exposes the full face of the bat to the ball one is less liable to miss it than if one only exposes an inch or two. Many first-class batsmen, although agreeing that the safest method is to play with a straight bat, do not carry this out. The most noticeable offender in this respect is Abel, who does not seem to have suffered much by not strictly adhering to the recognised method.

Various are the ways in which batsmen hold their bats, and there is no specified manner of so doing. A method should be aimed at by which a man can control his bat easily and effectively. Ridicule would be excited if a beginner were to adopt the method of Major Poore, who exposes the bare edge of the bat to the view of the bowler, but, like that gallant officer, he might be none the less effective.

Position when Batting.

Just in the same way there is no hard and fast rule as to the position that one should adopt when batting. The most general position is for the right foot to be placed about two inches inside the batting crease, and the left a foot outside, in the direction of the bowler, not of square leg. By adopting an easy and natural attitude a graceful style is more easily cultivated, but no one should sacrifice effectiveness to style. The aim and object of a match is

Stepping Out

to obtain more runs than one's opponents, and therefore the manner of scoring them is but a secondary consideration. In point of style the Australians are inferior to our best batsmen, but one could not question the effectiveness of their cricket.

In order to be able to move quickly in playing forward or running out, the weight of the body should not be placed on the left leg, but on the right. One runs less risks by never moving the right foot out of the crease, but one may often miss a good many runs by doing so. Such masters of the game as W. G. Grace and Ranjitsinhji are firm believers in keeping the right leg rigid, but there are a limited few that do not adopt that method, excepting to slow bowlers. By being quick on one's feet a great many good length balls may be made to produce runs which would not have been scored if one had stayed in one's ground.

Stepping Out.

Often a ball is delivered of a length that causes a doubt to arise in your mind as to whether to play forward or back; by stepping out it becomes harmless. To attain a certain amount of proficiency in this stepping-out method of dealing with the bowling, hesitancy is the main evil to be guarded against. The presence of a wicket-keeper must be entirely forgotten, nor must the fear of missing the ball ever enter one's head. To slow bowling no half-hearted measures must be adopted in an effort to get to the pitch of the ball, whether one is going to hit or play it. On caked or crumbling wickets the policy of stepping out is a very paying one.

Forward Play.

In dealing with the bowling two methods are employed, namely, forward and back play. On a good hard wicket all strokes indulged in are more or less of the former description, except in the case of short-pitched

Playing Back

bowling. Advancing the left foot forward as far as he can without over-reaching himself, the player should meet the ball with an upright bat, held close to the left leg. The ball should always when possible be kept along the ground, and in order more effectually to do so, the bat should be slanting a little downward at the moment of striking the ball. By perfect timing all the weight is brought to bear on the ball when hit, so that the slightest loss of balance means loss of power.

W. G. Grace's admonition as to never allowing "the ball to hit the bat, but the bat to hit the ball" should be remembered, for it is possible to score runs by forward play even when on the defence. No player at present before the public possesses such a graceful style as does Lionel C. H. Palaret. Essentially a forward player, he times the ball with almost mechanical precision, and with perfect ease. All his strokes are executed without any undue exertion, and yet he drives harder on the off-side than almost any player; as an object-lesson in style and timing he is irreplaceable.

Playing Back.

A batsman may be an adept at forward play, but he will never attain to a high standard of excellence until he has acquired proficiency in the intricacies of back play, not only as a means of defence, but also offence. In playing back it is by no means a bad plan to retreat a step in the direction of the wickets, as by this means one is often able to turn a fair length ball into a long hop; on wet wickets one is able to bring off this shot frequently. As a general rule, never play forward on a sticky wicket; any ball that cannot be played back to should be hit.

The Mow, and Effective Stroke.

The most effective stroke on a bad wicket is the *mow*, a variation of the pull. To make this stroke one should

Clean Hard Drives

get as low down as possible, and hit with a horizontal bat, taking care to hit a little to the off-side of the ball, as that insures hitting with the break. To an off-break bowler on a sticky wicket this is a paying stroke, especially to balls pitching straight. A pull-stroke is indispensable on all slow wickets, but on fast wickets is not to be commended, as in indulging in it one takes more than ordinary risks, especially to fast bowling.

A batsman with a good eye rarely commits the fault of playing forward when he should have played back or *vice versa*; nor is he often deceived by a Yorker, which is really a full pitch in disguise, and should be treated as such.

Clean Hard Drives.

Of all the strokes in batting none give more pleasure to the batsman than the clean hard drive either to the off or on. There are three distinct varieties of the off-drive, the drive between point and cover, the drive between cover and mid-off, and the drive to long-off. The stroke that goes between cover and point savours somewhat of the cut, inasmuch as it is a wristy stroke mingled with arm-swing and shoulder power. It is made off a ball a little short of a half-volley, and just a little wide of the off-stump, and is a genuine forward stroke produced by accurate timing, which needs little exertion.

With a well pitched up ball, not necessarily a half-volley, the drive between cover and mid-off with accurate timing can be driven with more force than almost any stroke. By getting well over the ball not only does the batsman minimise the risk of giving a chance, but he is also able to put every ounce of his weight in the stroke; left-handers as a rule utilise this stroke more frequently than right-handers.

Drives of extraordinary power and distance can be brought about by running out to good length straight balls and driving them to long-off. One is able to put more power into one's stroke by moving towards the ball

Strokes to the Off

than by waiting for it. The ball off which batsmen as a rule bring this drive into play is a little short of a half-volley on the off-stump, and the full swing of the body is used. The careful never-take-risk batsman does not indulge in these strokes, excepting when a timely half-volley arouses him from his masterly inactivity. To keep the ball on the ground is a golden rule, but it does not follow that the ball should never be lifted. Runs from brilliant drives on the off-side are saved time after time by smart fieldsmen through the ball being kept down; if one occasionally lifts a ball over mid-off or extra cover's head, the risk run is not very great.

Strokes to the Off.

Bowlers of to-day do not bowl so much at the wickets as was formerly the case, but adopt a method of bowling outside the off-stump, which is known as the "off-theory." Consequently off-strokes are more prevalent. A ball that is played behind or square with the wicket on the off is called a *cut*, and it is of all strokes the most productive.

Cuts are of two descriptions, late and square. The most general method of making the *late cut* is by moving the right foot across the wicket in a line with the off-stump and hitting the ball after it has passed the batsman, sometimes even after it has passed the wicket. It is essentially a wrist shot, and against fast bowling a most telling stroke, especially as once having mastered it one is able to place the ball at will.

The *square cut* differs from the *late* not only in the direction in which it travels, but in the method of making it. Some players advocate the same leg being placed across the wicket as one would for the *late cut*, but by doing so one is rather apt to hit across the ball. By placing the left leg across one is able to come down on the ball, and it lessens the chance of being caught in the slips. The stroke should be made the instant that the ball is past the body off any ball a little short of a good length, correct timing rather than force being used.

Strokes to the On-Side

Strokes to the On-Side.

Excepting when playing a break-leg bowler strokes on the on-side are of infrequent occurrence, and, when they do occur are generally made off balls on the leg-side. The leg glide that Ranjitsinhji did so much to popularise requires the least exertion, but it is a most difficult stroke to become proficient in. It is not given to every one to possess such wonderfully quick eyesight or flexible wrists as the Indian Prince, but the stroke may be imitated with some success by assiduous practice.

To a good length ball on the leg side one should put the left leg straight down the wicket with the bat in front of it, the face of the bat slanting at the time of meeting the ball. The direction of the stroke can be altered by increasing or diminishing the slant at which the bat is held. Balls off which one can bring the leg glance into play can be also hit either in the direction of long or square leg, and this is the more general method of dealing with them.

The merest tyro can deal with that most infrequent of balls the half-volley to leg, as hitting on the on-side is the natural inclination of every beginner. Suffice it to say that more power should be put into the shot, as on that side of the wicket one is apt to misjudge the flight of the ball, especially if it be a little wide.

The success that attended the efforts of Armstrong the Australian was not brought about by anything phenomenal in the way of leg-break, for he scarcely turned the ball more than a couple of inches. It was due rather to the difficulty, owing to his wide bowling on the leg side, of judging the flight of the ball.

The ability to move one's feet quickly either forward or back is of immense service to a batsman. By stepping forward one is able to turn a good length ball into a half-volley, and by reversing the process a similar ball may be converted into a long hop, and it is this latter method

Want of Nerve

that is used in the employment of the hook stroke. Off fast bumpy bowling it is the safest method to adopt, especially when the ball rises to the uncomfortable height of one's head. By facing the ball almost square it is quite possible to hit it round as it rises into the direction of square leg, but it requires a considerable amount of nerve and quickness of sight.

Want of Nerve.

A batsman may possess innumerable strokes and yet never be a success in first-class cricket, for he may not be able to put those strokes into execution through nervousness. Either from lack of confidence, over-anxiety, or self-consciousness, many batsmen who are really fine players in second-class cricket fail in the ordeal of playing before a crowd. Even old-experienced players plead guilty to a slight feeling of over-anxiety, an extra keenness to do themselves justice on some great occasion. After all this is not very unnatural, though it is a difficult matter to overcome. Nervous batsmen at the start of their innings cannot restrain their anxiety to be saved from the ignominy of dismissal without scoring, and will often risk their wicket as well as that of their partners by attempting a very short run. It is a reprehensible habit that should be checked, as it really means the placing of self before the welfare of the side.

Playing the Ball with the Pad.

There is a style of play that has been rapidly on the increase during the past few years, the practice of unnecessarily using the pads to play the ball with. On sticky wickets players are justified somewhat in obtaining assistance in that manner, but on fast true wickets the habit is not wanted. Slow cricket, tedious as it may be, is interesting to watch, but to see ball after ball played

Change of Style

with the pads instead of the bat is trying one's patience a little too high. With leg-break bowling the practice is becoming too general, and it is difficult to find the remedy for such tactics.

Change of Style.

Occasions arise when one has to change one's style of play either in the direction of forcing the game or attempting to save it, but there are few batsmen who can successfully do so. To change one's game when nearing the century, or even the half-century, is a fatal mistake, as many batsmen have found to their cost. It seems absurd that after a batsman has once got the upper hand of the bowling he should place himself on the same level as one who has just commenced his innings. Once having got his eye in it should be the batsman's object to keep it in, and not jeopardise his innings for the sole reason of gaining the coveted century. He should remember that he is playing for his side, and that self should be eliminated.

Bustling for Specs.

"Bustling for specs" is another fruitful cause for alteration in a man's game. It is often amusing to watch the shifts to which a batsman is reduced should the bowler not quickly give him a chance of avoiding the dreaded pair. I remember an instance of a great batsman whose skill and experience should have taught him better; he played a ball straight to the right hand of point, and then found fault with his partner for not backing up. On another occasion a player of the stone-wall type was once bustling at Old Trafford against Briggs and Mold. Now Mold was one of the most likely bowlers in the world to bowl a man out before he had time to get a proper sight of the ball. Knowing this our batsman evidently decided to settle the matter with the slow bowler, whose first ball was a good length one, on or just

Undue Prominence Given to Batting

outside the off-stump, the very ball from which, under ordinary circumstances, he would never have dreamt of trying to score. This time, however, he jumped out and struck desperately. The ball hit the middle of the bat and reached the square leg boundary. He afterwards batted for a couple of hours for some thirty runs, having apparently come to the conclusion that such risky tactics were only justified by the urgency of the occasion, and were on no account to be repeated under ordinary circumstances.

Undue Prominence Given to Batting.

The undue prominence bestowed on batting is in a large measure accountable for the dearth of good bowlers. To set a batsman who has scored fifty runs on a good wicket on the same level with the bowler, who may have caused the dismissal of half the side, is unfair to the latter. Many County Committees award a guinea as talent money to any professional who scores fifty runs, and the same sum to a bowler taking five wickets, thereby encouraging batting at the expense of bowling. To score fifty runs is a simple matter indeed compared with the task of disposing of half a side, and it therefore stands to reason that a bowler who may possess some little talent as a batsman will endeavour to cultivate his batting, even at the expense of his bowling, when he sees it is manifestly to his advantage to do so.

A Sensible System.

The system introduced by Yorkshire of awarding marks for meritorious play in *any branch of the game* is to be greatly commended, as an earnest endeavour to place all branches of the game on a more equal footing.

CHAPTER III

Modern Bowling

By C. L. TOWNSEND.

Has Bowling Deteriorated?

ARE the bowlers of to-day as good as the bowlers of times gone by? This question is frequently asked and answered, but in how many thousand different ways. In truth, to answer such a problem as this correctly is impossible, for comparisons are always odious, and without equal conditions are meaningless and altogether misleading. Nothing has changed more in the last forty years than the circumstances under which cricket is played. The changes may have been gradual, but they have been numerous, and have all tended towards one end—the improvement of batting.

The Bat has now the Mastery.

Whereas in the first place the bowlers had the mastery over the batsman, gradually, very gradually, the batsmen have been gaining the upper hand, so that now and for the last few years the batsmen have the mastery over the bowlers, so much so that the one outcry at the present time is for help for the poor bowler.

As far back as the 'seventies, owing in the first place to the marvellous batting of W. G. Grace, and in the second place to the gradual improvement of the wickets, the bowlers first began to have a bad time, but they were not to be easily defeated, and the astonishing bowling of the Australians—F. R. Spofforth, H. F. Boyle, and G. E. Palmer, bowlers who had faced and overcome the con-

The Wickets are Greatly Improved

ditions that were then only just being felt in England—introduced altogether fresh ideas in the art of bowling.

For a time, with the aid of the conditions then existing and of such splendid bowlers as Peate, Peel, Attewell, Barlow, Lohmann, A. G. Steel among others, the bowlers kept on a level with the batsmen. However, all this time the game was developing, as it now has continued to do.

It would be absurd to compare the conditions under which Peate bowled to those under which, say, Rhodes has bowled; they are absolutely and entirely different. I will point out some of the difficulties that a bowler of the last few years has had to face, and then trace the effect they have had on him.

The Wickets are Greatly Improved.

First, then, there is no question that the general run of wickets that are played upon to-day are immensely superior to what they were even ten years ago. At that time, of course, there were many good ones, but still more bad ones. Nowadays, what with Nottingham marl and various manure preparations, it is possible to make a perfect wicket on soils before considered hopeless, and it is hard to say where you will meet with a bad wicket in County Cricket.

Batting is consequently Better.

Secondly, this enormous improvement in grounds has not taken place without a corresponding improvement in batting. Where there were two good batsmen on a side in former days, there are now eight or nine, and very often more, who are all capable batsmen. Look, for instance, at Yorkshire; when can you confidently say that you have got them out? Certainly not till you have seen the back of Hunter, who generally goes in last, for he is an excellent player should occasion arise.

It is not only that the general run of players have

Improvement in Bats

improved, but there are so many more really first-class bats than there used to be. Every County side has now their W. G.; that is to say, a player who is pretty sure to make a good score, and in all probability a big one. Without wishing to compare any one with W. G.—for that is impossible, he is beyond and above comparison—there are many playing now who, for a season or two, some of them for a good many more, are to bowlers what W. G. has been for thirty odd years. I refer to such players as K. S. Ranjitsinhji and C. B. Fry, Abel and Hayward, Shrewsbury and Gunn, Maclaren and Tyldesley, and so on.

Improvement in Bats.

Incidentally with the improvement of the batsmen I would mention the fact that the bats themselves have improved to a great extent. Every year they seem to bring out better bats, and to make them with better balance, better handles, and generally better shape. It is true that a good player in form would make runs with a broom handle, but the better his bat, the better he will play. There is nothing more delightful than having confidence in your bat, to know and feel that you have only to play forward and the ball will go for four, or that if you do have a hit up in the air it will sail over every one and land among the seats. Such a bat as this W. G. used in 1895, when he made his thousand runs in May. It was made by Nicholls, and the ball seemed literally to fly off it. Of course this was in a great measure due to the Doctor's marvellous timing; yet it was a wonderful weapon!

Many more Matches are Played. •

Thirdly, the amount of bowling that a first-class bowler has to get through in the course of a season has enormously increased even in the last ten years. From eight first-class Counties in 1890, the number has risen to fifteen at the present day. Consequently most of the

An Examination of the Difficulties

Counties play over twenty matches, while such Counties as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Surrey play much nearer thirty. When not playing in County Cricket, the great bowlers are pretty sure to be playing in some representative match, so that it is not going outside the truth to say that the best bowlers have to bowl from the end of April till the middle of September, without a break.

An Examination of the Difficulties.

Looking at these difficulties this question immediately arises, Are they sufficient to have brought it about that in an average year in England the batsmen should hold the upper hand? I am inclined to think that they are. In the first place, let me trace the effect of these perfect wickets on bowlers generally.

It was in Australia that this difficulty was first experienced, and they found out that, in order to get men out on a perfect wicket, natural skill must be intellectually combined with every artifice and resource at your command; how, in fact, it was useless merely to peg away. They gave new life to our English bowlers, and by teaching them to use their heads, laid the foundation of all the best bowling to-day.

There is no doubt that the splendid bowlers of that time were enabled to keep on a level with the batsmen, yet it must be remembered that the wickets and batsmen as they were then were not the wickets and batsmen of to-day. They, the bowlers, had not to do everything; they would be helped by the wicket; it is immaterial to what extent, for a little help will change the whole aspect. To-day they get none.

Could we now have back all the best English and Australian bowlers that there have ever been, and let them take the place of the present bowlers, would they once more put the bowler on a level with the batsmen and solve the problem of drawn games? I cannot think that they would. •

Different Conditions in Australia

There are always a certain number of Englishmen who extol the Australian bowling and fielding, and place it far above our own. Though I do not agree with them, yet even if it is so, it is plain that they would not solve the problem of drawn games.

Different Conditions in Australia.

Cricket in Australia is an entirely different game from our own, for, finding that they could not finish their matches in three days, they played them out to a finish. With practically unlimited time to play the match in the conditions are entirely altered, and the batsmen cannot be said to master the bowling, for it becomes entirely a question of comparison. A good bowling side will get the same batting side out for less runs than a bad bowling side, and to dismiss a side for 400 may be a fine bowling performance in Australia. In England it may be equally fine in merit, but the probabilities are that the game will be drawn, that is to say, that the bowlers cannot do what is required of them.

I shall never forget the sort of hopeless feeling we felt about finishing the Test Match at the Oval in 1899. On such a wicket as that was, the only chance of finishing a Test Match in three days would have been to play all bowlers and no batsmen.

The second of the difficulties I have mentioned has a far-reaching effect on the bowler. He may, by a piece of wonderful bowling, have got out, say, seven of a wonderful batting side. On a good hard wicket this cannot be done in a minute, nor without hard work. Now, if the last four men are what are known as "Rabbits," then he will speedily finish off the innings and come out with a splendid record, without having unduly tired himself; but if the next player happens to be of the calibre of Hirst, who used to come in about this time, he will find that he is bowling to just as good a player as those who have gone before, and that he, from physical weariness

A Summing Up

ness, cannot bowl nearly as well as before. The result is often this, that he has to bowl on till he is tired out. Both those first two difficulties are responsible with the third for the enormous amount of bowling a good bowler has to get through in a year. In a dry summer it is easy to understand what a strain this must be. It may not be apparent at the time, but it surely tells its tale in the long run.

There is nothing more common in England at the present day than for a bowler to suddenly lose all his sting and "devil." He looks to bowl in the same way, but it is as different as chalk from cheese. He is, in fact, dead stale, and should have a good rest. This is just what he cannot do in County Cricket; the calls on him are too numerous, and his understudies too few to enable him to drop out for a time, and on his playing in many cases his livelihood depends. Consequently he has to bowl away when he knows and feels that he can't, and the damage thus done to him is often irreparable, for it tends to destroy his confidence, an all-important factor in the success of a bowler.

A Summing Up.

Shortly, then, this is the position of the bowler to-day. Though the batsmen as a whole are far better than they used to be, yet he gets no assistance from the average wicket, and consequently has to bowl till he is worn out, with no rest to recover his strength. Under these conditions I do not think it strange that the batsmen have the best of it.

What is the Remedy?

How can this be remedied? In an article I wrote some little time ago I tried to point out that much of the present state of affairs in County Cricket was due to two things: In the first place, to the little inducement that is offered to a County to win a match as compared to a draw; and

What is the Remedy

in the second place, to the way bowling and fielding are neglected as studies, everything being given up to batting. I am still of opinion that there is very much truth in this, and that to increase materially the reward for winning a match would have a very beneficial effect both on the brightness of the cricket played, and on the number of games finished.

The superiority of the batsmen has now been established for a sufficient time, and yet the number of bowlers has not increased, nor has the fielding improved, and I feel myself compelled to admit that you must look at the position as it actually is, and not at what it ought to be. This has forced me much against my will and inclination to come to the conclusion that something must be done for the bowler, something far more effective than widening the crease, which appears to have been singularly ineffective. I have long been content to say, "The game is good enough as it is, why alter it?" but I am now beginning to realise how fallacious a view this is. For the game has been slowly altering from year to year in the many respects I have named.

One does not realise how much the evolution of the scythe into a mowing machine changed the game for the good of the batsmen. I should be the last to suggest that there should be any return to the primitive game—for it is impossible to go back in any game—but I do strongly urge that something be done to remedy this failing that undoubtedly exists at the present day. There have been many suggestions made during the last few years, but they have all tended only to help the bowler on those occasions when he is in no need of it.

For instance, the new leg-before rule could only have been of any material assistance to a bowler on a sticky wicket. To the proposed new change in the width of the wicket the same objection can be raised, for it would be of great assistance to a bowler on a sticky wicket, where the ball time after time beats the bats only just to miss the stumps, and only of slight assistance on a

What is the Remedy

plumb wicket. Speaking from my own experience as a bowler, by far the greatest assistance to me on a hard wicket would have been an addition to the height of the wicket. For on such wickets the ball always tends to rise over the top of the bails.

I should far more strongly support two or three inches being added to the height of the wicket than an inch being added to the breadth, if these are to be alternatives; but I feel that if you are going to alter the size of the wicket, you had much better have it both higher and broader. To make the extra breadth, I would rather see four stumps put closer together than to have an increase in their circumference. This would necessitate having three bails, but I cannot see any objection to this. It is a difficult question, and becomes no easier if you consider it from a purely local cricketer's point of view, where runs are hard enough to get as it is owing to the bad wickets. Of course this does not apply to the better-class club cricket, where the wickets are equally as good as in County Cricket.

Notwithstanding this and other objections, I think the balance of advantage is in favour of this or some other change to help the bowler. A change of this sort should not take place in a hurry, and I should very much like to see a committee formed of present-day players in County Cricket, who could experiment in a cricket-shed like they have at Nottingham, and report the result. For instance, the opinion of Arthur Shrewsbury on its effectiveness or otherwise after he had played against, say, Wass and John Gunn would be invaluable.

It is absurd to legislate in the dark, and no change should be made before it has been tested and approved by experts. To be of any service in solving the problem it must increase the difficulty of the batsman, and lessen the labours of the bowlers, for then, and then only, will they be put on a level once more.

CHAPTER IV

Batsmen and their Methods

By GEORGE BRANN.

Steady Batting.

DURING the last few seasons of County Cricket we have heard a great amount of grumbling, both in pavilions—where growls are generally more prevalent than praise—and also in the sporting press, about the increase of slow batting. There may or may not be good cause for this, but the fact remains that, in spite of the growls that our fine old game is going to the dogs solely on account of the steadiness, the interest in first-class cricket is increasing year by year.

Possibly the rate of run-getting has decreased of late years, but this may be accounted for by the number of innings a batsman has to play in the course of a season. He must now husband his resources, for he is playing day in day out from the first of May until the middle of September, and should he be a consistent run-getter, and a bit of a change bowler as well, or even a "country" fieldsman, he will have a severe strain put upon his physical powers, and feels—like a boxer—that he must occasionally "spar for wind."

No General Rule.

There are, of course, a number of batsmen, like G. L. Jessop, Francis Ford, S. M. J. Woods, Ernest Smith, and others, to whom hitting is quite a natural gift requiring no effort. Others, not so well endowed, find that a hard-hit innings is a great strain, and after a brilliant century, in order to recover their strength,

Begin with Vigour

are compelled to adopt a steadier style for a time. They discover that they still make runs; that their average, thanks to a steady not-out innings, is going up; that their captain compliments them on their greater consistency and value to their side; and they eventually find themselves placed under the category of steady bats. Who can blame them?

They get through a hard season with far less tear and stress, are of more permanent use to their side, and possibly have a paragraph all to themselves in *Wisden*, when the season comes to be reckoned up.

Begin with Vigour.

The writer is not holding a brief for steady batting. No beginner should deliberately be taught to play steadily. The bat was built to hit with, and boys should be made to strike hard and often. The natural tendency of a healthy boy ought to be to go for the bowling, and great care should be shown in curbing this impetuosity too early. Age, with which comes experience, will teach steadiness and defence, and the art of hitting once acquired will never be entirely forgotten. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether a youngster, coached as a defensive player only, will ever attain the knack of hitting in after years, even if he be gifted with the physique, and he will thus have missed that most thrilling of all cricket sensations, the clean drive for six into an adjoining parish.

Grades of Steadiness.

Steady batsmen may be classed under several headings:

1. The genuine stonewaller, who obstinately refuses to be tempted by any kind of ball.
2. The patient player, who waits for a loose ball.

The Stonewaller

3. The correct, over-coached, off-side forward player, who invariably plays the ball to a fieldsman.

4. The watchful, hard back-player, who is not quick-footed enough to jump to the ball.

The other class is: the reformed hitter.

The Stonewaller.

With the departure of Barlow, Scotton, Louis Hall, and Alec Bannerman from the wicket, the real old-fashioned stonewaller to a large extent disappeared. They exemplified what might be termed the "block" system of batting.

Barlow made the utmost use of his gloves, which somewhat resembled a Crusader shield, off which it was no uncommon thing for him to score singles.

Scotton—once a good hitter—devoted his energy and patience to smothering every ball, whether half-volley or long hop, making use of a half-cock forward stroke for the purpose. Of the four men above mentioned, he had perhaps the style most monotonous to watch.

Louis Hall was physically unable to hit, but on slow wickets he has been known to pull a long hop with considerable force.

Alec Bannerman, who is the only Australian batsman who has visited us with the genuine stonewall methods, was a combination of the three Englishmen. The four have all helped to make cricket history, and were of the greatest service to their respective sides.

The Olden Style.

Amongst first-class batsmen of to-day Dr. Macdonald is perhaps the nearest approach to this old style. Even he will hit a full toss to the boundary, and last year kept Leicestershire at the head of the Counties for a whole week by staying in for over six hours, and scoring 50 runs. The match was drawn.

Patient Batsmen

W. Troup of Gloucestershire almost comes under this heading, but he can and will hit a well pitched up ball on the off side extremely hard, and occasionally indulges in quite a reckless slog. W. G. Quaife of Warwickshire is usually termed a stonewaller, but he has a large repertoire of strokes, with beautiful "wristy" shots, and at times plays delightfully.

Patient Batsmen.

Patient players are numerous. T. Horan and Dr. Barrett, two Australians, were able exponents, whilst W. H. Patterson (one of the few cricketers who could make a century without practice) and many others made great reputations as stanch defenders.

The Over-Coached.

The third class, viz. those who appear to be playing freely, but invariably hit the ball to a fieldsman, are difficult to bracket. C. E. M. Wilson of Cambridge is, to watch, almost a free bat, and seems to hit exceedingly hard on the off side, but his shots are too correct, and invariably go to a fieldsman, and this makes him a slow scorer. J. Vine is another. The amount of energy he wastes in scoring 50 would suffice, say, Prince Ranjitsinhji, in making 500. Vine was formerly a hitter, but by constant back-drill practice has developed his present safe style. He often saves his side from defeat.

The Sound, Safe, and Watchful.

Two of the finest examples of the sound, safe, watchful game are W. L. Murdoch and A. P. Lucas. Veterans both, genuine veterans too, with twenty-five years of first-class cricket behind them, but still object-lessons to the rising generation. Slow scorers, you say, but attractive slow scorers. In their case the bat meets the

Reformed Hitters

ball, not half-heartedly, but with all the force of wrist and forearm, and the back stroke, though used primarily as a stroke of defence, scores four.

A. Shrewsbury and W. Gunn are names to conjure with, both often dubbed "potterers," and held up as examples of a style of play that will drive spectators from the cricket-field. The driving has taken many years, and Notts County is (thanks chiefly to them) going as strong as ever. Both have brought their particular branch of the game to a science. Had they chosen the other part, both might have been hitters. Gunn, owing to his great reach and strength, certainly could have been a Thornton, but we doubt whether Shrewsbury's physique sufficed for such development.

Reformed Hitters.

Reformed hitters, like reformed golfing cricketers, we have. A. E. Stoddart during his last year or two of first-class cricket to some extent developed a more watchful style of play. His large experience of whole week matches in Australia, or possibly his anxieties as captain of the English XI. in those strenuous, nerve-breaking Test Matches, may be answerable for the change, but there is no doubt that to the spectator who rejoices only in big hitting he was not the hero of old.

George Giffen was once a long-distance hitter, and a great authority in the person of W. L. Murdoch has said that he was an even bigger smiter than Bonner, but he was a bowler, who for choice would gladly bowl all day; and he no doubt discovered that after a hard hit innings his fingers lost their touch, and like a wise man took his batting more sedately.

C. M'Gahey of Essex came out as a natural hitter, but since he has taken seriously to bowling has adopted a more subdued method, and his batting average shows that he has no reason to regret his new style.

His confrère, P. Perrin, although he can hardly be

Effect of Reports and Averages

classed as a reformed hitter, gives one the impression that, if he chose, he could treat the bowler much more severely, and hit the ball far beyond the boundaries of most County grounds. Few big batsmen boast such strong, supple wrists as his.

Effect of Reports and Averages.

The temptation to stay longer at the wickets is now—owing to the weekly publishing of averages—greater than of old. If batsmen were not fearful of seeing their names (perhaps very low down on the list) blazoned forth to their friends and enemies almost daily, they might exercise less care. The average improves possibly, and the erstwhile hitter imperceptibly slides into a steady style, and that habit once acquired, it is most difficult to drift back to the happy hitting ways. For there is undoubtedly more pleasure and excitement in a hard century knock than in a whole series of steady fifties. Besides, there will be a special headline in the morning paper—“Brilliant batting by Mr. —,” which will give the breakfast-table a brighter aspect.

Other Causes of Slow Play.

There is another headline which one, alas! often sees—“Slow play at So and So.” The poor batsmen are at once blamed for this, and at times justly too, but if we look deeper we may find that the bowlers may have had a hand in it. 'Tis the fashion now, and apparently the chief object of a bowler, to get what is called his length. If he always found it between wicket and wicket matters would be all right, but he has developed the off theory, which he bowls with great ease and machine-like accuracy.

The young batsman is tempted and falls, but after being caught at slip or extra slip several times, he naturally asks his elders' advice, and is told to abjure the “if” shot, which, being interpreted, means “if” you hit the

Australian Tactics

ball you get out. The novice in his next innings remembers the good advice, and allows the stumper to swallow the off bait, but the bowler wilfully shuts his eyes to the fact that the fish is not feeding, and still continues pounding away outside the off stump. The result is that the cricket becomes extremely slow and uninteresting, and the battle between bowler and batsmen resolves itself into one of patience. Let bowlers bowl more at the wickets, and the rate of scoring will improve twenty per cent.

Australian Tactics.

Australian bowlers adopt quite different tactics. Trumble, for instance, a head bowler in the best sense of the term, will begin by testing a batsman on his weak points, one of which may possibly be the "if" shot, but as soon as he finds that his former victim is not to be tempted, he will at once adopt different tactics, altering his delivery from over to round the wicket, and thus compel the batsman to play at the ball.

Very few Australians have been machines. Take Albert Trott. The scoring is never slow whilst he is bowling, for he compels people to hit or get out, generally the latter.

So when next you see slow play, Mr. Spectator, please be impartial, and watch the methods of bowlers as well as batsmen.

Spectators as Critics.

Whilst on the subject of spectators, 'tis most curious and instructive to notice the utterly divergent views they take of slow play on their own grounds. If the home side is struggling manfully for a draw, scoring at the rate of twenty runs an hour, each ball is watched with breathless interest; and when the batsmen who have wearily been at back drill for three or four hours succeed in their efforts, they meet with a perfect ovation.

On the other hand, let the struggling side be from a

When Slow Play is Justified

far County, and do the same thing. They are not hooted, 'tis true, but the spectators dwindle away by twos and threes, muttering gloomy prophecies of the early doom of County Cricket if such exhibitions continue.

When Slow Play is Justified.

There is as much credit due to a team that has fought against fate in the shape of a sticky or crumbled wicket, and has effected a draw, even though it be by slow play, as in many a gallant victory.

For the past two years Yorkshire have saved both matches at Brighton and Sussex by grim, solid defence. On neither occasion was it possible to win the game, and in 1901 a defeat might have jeopardised their position as Champion County.

Perhaps Brown and Tunnicliffe carried their caution to extremes when defeat was averted, but the unmannerly tactics of a small percentage of the Sussex spectators, who steadily "booed" at them from the very start of their innings, was probably their only reason for doing this. After the experience of the previous evening, when eight Yorkshire wickets fell in less than an hour, they were fully justified in not taking the least risk, and had not the crowd annoyed them they would probably have demonstrated later that they had only restrained themselves for the sake of their side. Both can, and do, hit, and the Yorkshire team generally make their runs quickly. Half the secret of their success is their adaptability to circumstances. They will often clinch a victory by an hour's reckless hitting, or stave off a defeat by hours of steady plodding.

Exaggerated Prudence is a Mistake.

There are times, however, when slow tactics are not to be countenanced. The story goes that on one occasion a batsman with stonewalling propensities, and with

About Leg-Play

ambitions regarding his average, was quite spoiling his side's chances of winning the match. An impromptu committee meeting was held to devise a scheme for his destruction, and as the only possible way of bringing this about was to run him out, the next batsman was deputed to do so at all costs. The plotter may have given the show away by making the attempt too palpably; at all events the fielding side, with an astute old skipper in charge, quickly tumbled to the situation, and the ball was invariably thrown to the wrong end, with the result that the "Guy Fawkes" of the scheme eventually found himself stranded in the middle of the pitch, and retired as gracefully as he could, run out. The stonewaller serenely blocked away, carried out his bat, and the match was drawn.

To the credit of cricketers a case of this kind is very rare, and professionals as well as amateurs are always prepared to sacrifice their wickets by brilliant, reckless hitting should occasion require it.

About Leg-Play.

It is usual to couple steady play with what is termed leg-play. This style has called forth much adverse criticism, chiefly among the older school of batsmen, who were not early initiated into its mysteries. They argue that the bat is the proper instrument for defending the wickets. A very just and unanswerable argument; but there are occasions, if the ball is playing all kinds of antics on a sun-baked or crumbled wicket, and the bowlers are making a hash of the hitters, when the adept at the noble art of leg defence is much to be envied.

Arthur Shrewsbury and William Gunn were the earliest and possibly the greatest exponents of the science, and many a match both for Notts and England have they won with the aid of their trusty nads.

The Leg-before-Wicket Rule

Some Notable Exponents.

Prince Ranjitsinhji, the quickest man with his bat the cricket-field has ever seen, does not despise this mode of defence, and by no stretch of imagination can he be classed as a steady player.

Charles Fry, his understudy, has also brought it to an exact science, and both F. S. Jackson and T. L. Taylor have been known to cover the three stumps most successfully when occasion required it. They differ from Shrewsbury and Gunn in that their legs are not guarding the wicket in pure defence only. They get in front to make strokes, and if the ball does break at a more acute angle than they anticipated, well, the legs are there, and the person to feel injured is the bowler.

As K. S. Ranjitsinhji says in his *Book of Cricket*: "It is not the use of the method, but the abuse of it that can with any fairness be criticised."

The Leg-before-Wicket Rule.

An attempt was made by the authorities last year to stop the habit, by investing the umpires with greater powers in regard to the l.b.w. rule, and a trial was given to the new suggestion by the second-class Counties. No better season could have been chosen, the number of wet wickets being far above the average, but the innovation has been universally condemned, and the skilful exponents of leg-cum-bat defence will still prosper and make runs.

Why Steadiness Pays.

As long as the game of cricket lasts, so long must there be steady batsmen. No side will ever become Champion County without a good stiffening of defensive players, any more than an army corps can be efficient without its complement of infantry.

Why Steadiness Pays

Spectators may sigh for a team of Jessops, but one is quite sufficient for a side if it wishes to attain consistency and win matches, which is after all the main object in competitive cricket. A side (however rich in hitters) that loses matches must, in the long run, suffer from lack of support and paucity of "gates," without which the large County organisations would soon cease to exist.

CHAPTER V

Fielding

BY G. L. JESSOP.

A Neglected Art.

THE neglect of the art of fielding is responsible in a large measure for the alarming increase in the amount of unfinished matches, which is a most regrettable feature of our first-class cricket; first-class only as regards the bowling and batting, for the standard of fielding is not worthy of being placed on such a high pedestal.

The improvements, not only in the wickets but in the fielding area of modern cricket grounds, can leave no loop-hole for such an excuse as roughness of ground for slovenly fielding. There can be no more pleasurable sight than to see a fine fielding side straining every nerve in their efforts to save runs. Colossal scoring even the most insatiable of gluttons may tire of, but good fielding never palls. Fielding is only second to bowling in the part it plays in the success of matches, for without it a good bowling style is rendered comparatively harmless.

The neglect of fielding commences from one's school-days, when little attention is given to practice. Practice in batting and bowling is considered part of the daily routine, but fielding, excepting in a haphazard fashion, does not seem to be seriously considered.

Its Prime Importance.

Fielding practice must necessarily become a trifle monotonous, and it may be on account of this that it is so often shirked, but as to the importance of it there can

Selfish Fielders

be no question. It is as necessary to the first-class cricketer as it is to the schoolboy, but even the former very rarely indulges in it. Constant practice will turn a bad fielder into a safe one, that is, one who may be expected to stop anything in reason, and not disgrace himself when a catch comes his way.

Playing to the Gallery.

The fieldsmen who always contrives to make the easiest of catches most difficult is but a poor creature, a seeker after cheap applause, and he cannot bear comparison with the man who by accurate judgment makes the most difficult catches appear the simplest. The former in his efforts to extort undue appreciation does not hesitate to sacrifice safety, and will run all sorts of risks in order to bring off a one-handed catch, for these, he knows from experience, rarely fail to procure for him an ovation.

Selfish Fielders.

He belongs to the same class as fieldsmen who never attempt any catch unless they have more than a possible chance of bringing it off successfully. They never strive for what may look impossible, and are content to field the ball on the first bounce. These selfish fielders do more to demoralise the side than does an over or two of full pitches or long hops from a nervous bowler.

As an instance of this there is a tale, which has the merit of being true, of a well-known Nottingham amateur, who has since ceased to participate in first-class cricket, receiving what should have been a catch at mid-on. The ball was driven to him at some speed, evidently at too great a pace for his liking, for instead of attempting to bring off the catch, he ducked his head and allowed the ball to proceed on its way to the boundary. On being expostulated with as to his missing the chance, he gave as his excuse that it was not a chance, as it did not touch

Seize every Chance in the Field

his hand. A good many players in like manner think that unless the ball is actually touched they cannot be blamed for having allowed an opportunity to pass.

Seize every Chance in the Field.

Whenever the slightest chance is given, however impossible it may look, no effort should be spared in an endeavour to bring about the downfall of the batsman at fault. Supposing that five chances are missed during an innings, the poor bowlers, instead of having to cause the dismissal of ten men, have that number increased to fifteen. Furthermore, after a batsman has been missed he gains confidence, and is on that account much more difficult to dislodge than would be a fresh batsman who has to play himself in. Drawn matches would be greatly diminished if fielding could be brought to the same pitch of perfection that marks the batting of to-day.

The finest fielding side that has ever been got together was that of Maclaren's team in Australia. It was freely acknowledged to be the best band of fieldsmen that has ever visited that country. Taking into account the high state of excellence to which this branch of the game has been brought in those parts, no higher compliment could have been possibly paid. The team was not picked specially on account of fielding, for it was not until the list was completed that the strength of the side in that department was discovered. The Australians, on the other hand, pick their sides with that end in view, and will even sacrifice batting in the attainment of their object. A move in the same direction should be made as regards English cricket, for the saving of runs is of as much importance as the making of them. Whilst admitting that the Australians are a little superior to England in bowling, yet, given a team picked with due consideration as to their fielding capacity, the Old Country need have no fear of the ashes reposing beneath the Southern Cross for any considerable period.

General Fielding

General Fielding.

Fielding in a general way, if one may be excused for treating it in a manner somewhat similar to the familiar Scotch sermon, can be divided into three parts, namely, ground fielding, throwing, and catching.

A Quick Return.

Everything that is not a catch is termed ground fielding, the three duties of which are stopping, picking up, and returning, a combination of duties that should be performed in an almost simultaneous manner. Only after continual and often irksome practice is one enabled to become proficient in this important and very necessary method. The time and runs saved by it are incalculable, especially in the long-field when two determined runners are batting. The ball hit straight to a long-field will always produce a single; if it is held for one instant before being returned, the best thrower in the world cannot prevent another run being obtained. There are very few fieldsmen who can throw seventy or eighty yards at great speed without going through some such preliminary as winding the arms about, or taking a step or two forward. No doubt by doing either of these one may be able to throw a good distance, but so much time is wasted thereby that it is not a habit to be encouraged. By assiduous practice one finds it just as easy to do without this organ-grinding process, which is neither useful nor ornamental.

Many players are satisfied if they can throw a good distance without regard to the method or the pace of the throw. Satisfaction beams on their countenances if perchance the ball reaches the wicket on the regulation long hop, even though its transit has been accomplished by means of a lofty elevation. They little reckon the loss of time that has been involved through this elevation.

Attentive Expectation

The lower the throw the quicker will it get to the wicket, so that it is speed not distance that is such an important requisite of fieldsmen in "the country."

• Australian throwing Process.

The Australians are greatly our superiors in throwing—legitimate throwing—and this is no doubt due to climatic influence. In a cold climate such as ours muscles are apt to contract, so much so, that any unusual effort of throwing results in a jarring sensation extending from the shoulder to the elbow, which is commonly called throwing one's arm out. In Australia one seldom experiences this unpleasant sensation, as the muscles are more flexible, and on this account one is able to throw greater distances and at greater speed. Many good judges of the game advocate throwing *above* the shoulder for long distances, and *below* for fieldsmen near a wicket, methods which it would be impossible to improve on.

Attentive Expectation.

The two greatest aids to a fieldsmen are *attention* and *anticipation*, and they bear the same relation to each other that steam does to a locomotive. *Momentary in-attention* will account for the losing of many a match. By the strictest of attention, and careful watching of the ball from the moment it leaves the bowler's hand to the moment it is struck, one is often enabled to anticipate the direction in which the ball will travel. To expect every ball to be hit to you is an excellent plan; you may be disappointed a good many times, but you will stand less chance of being caught napping.

Often in anticipating a batsman's stroke one starts before it is actually made; this especially applies to that fieldsmen who may be deputed, either from the nature of the wicket or the pokey style of the batsman, to stand in that position known as "silly point." This is a position

Behind the Wicket

of some danger, as the fieldsman stands in the direct line of fire of the batsman's off-drive, at a distance of ten yards.

Behind the Wicket.

Though fieldsmen in front of the wicket should be constantly on the move, it is a moot point as to whether it is advisable for those fielding behind the wicket, for instance the slips. When in that position one has so much less time for anticipating the stroke, that one is just as likely to move away from the ball as not. But if a fieldsman finds that he meets with more success by adopting that method, even though it be not a copy-book one, he may be well advised to keep to it. As in everything else, experience plays a most important part, and the more experience one gains, the more one is able to judge as to what are the correct methods to adopt in fielding, in the different positions in the field.

Some Golden Rules.

There are many golden rules to remember, not the least of which are, to return the ball *accurately* to the wickets, and always to *back up*. Nothing flurries or annoys a bowler more than to see runs given away to a batsman, out of all proportion to the merit of the stroke, through a wild return, or through negligence on the part of lethargic fieldsmen, of properly backing up the man to whom the ball is returned. Even the easiest of returns should be backed up, for anything may happen before the ball is safe. It may suddenly shoot, or through some irregularity in the turf, such as the hole that most bowlers make when delivering the ball, turn off at right angles completely out of reach of the man at the stumps. This is quite an *elementary* rule, and probably from this very fact so little attention is paid to it, nevertheless it is one that requires strict observance even among cricketers of the first rank.

In the Slips

Prompt Decision and Quick Returns.

Whenever a chance of running a man out occurs, the making up of one's mind which end the ball shall be returned to should be done before the ball arrives, and not when it is actually in the hand. The time wasted by committing that error is so much time gained by the batsmen to recover their crease. When near the wicket the ball should be returned on the full pitch, and if to the wicket-keeper, at one's full speed. With the bowler as recipient, one has to recognise that his hands have no protection from the assaults of the fieldsmen in the shape of gauntlets, so that some mercy and discretion must be shown in the matter of the pace of one's return.

In a close race between the runner and oneself, it is not a bad plan to aim directly at the wicket, trusting to the accuracy of your throw, as even if the ball does proceed to the boundary, one has the consoling thought that a wicket is worth more than four runs. Indiscriminate throwing is greatly to be discouraged, and whenever it is feasible the downfall of a batsman should be procured by co-operation with the man at the wicket.

In the Slips.

With the exception of the wicket-keeper, there are no more important positions in the field than those that are termed the slips. To fast bowling it is customary to put three men in these positions, or even at times as many as four, designating them as first, second, third, and fourth slips. First and second slip used to be termed short and covered slip, but custom has altered slightly, and they are generally referred to numerically.

The duties of each differ so slightly that one can deal with these positions as a whole. If it was possible to calculate at the end of a season the mode of dismissal of all the batsmen in England, one may safely say that one-half at least owed their downfall to a catch in the slips.

Third Man

Again, one might also say that a large majority of catches missed might be traced to the same position. It is a most difficult position to fill, and, like the wicket-keeper's, an unenviable one. Catches are rarely easy on account of the difficulty in judging the pace after the ball has touched the bat. One has to be equally certain of catching with one's left as with one's right hand, but, as in every other position in the field, one must use both hands if possible.

Avoidance of snapping at the ball, instead of allowing the ball to reach the hand, will save moments of agony, caused by bruised finger tips, and also prove of greater service to one's side. Half the catches missed in this position are caused by inattention and this habit of snatching at the ball. Naturally, on fast wickets *slip* would not be so close to the wicket as on slow, neither would he be as near to fast bowling as to bowling of lesser pace.

Some wonderful catches are at times brought off in this position, but one that was made during the innings of the Australians at Birmingham was of all the most wonderful that I have ever seen. One of Hirst's deliveries got up rather awkwardly when Hill was attempting the leg glide, and as a consequence he nicked, the ball a little on the leg-side. Braund, in the position of first slip, anticipating the stroke, sprang over to that side of the wicket, securing the ball with the right hand two or three inches from the ground. It was a magnificent effort, and the manner in which he reached the ball would have done credit to an acrobat.

Third Man.

To fill adequately the position of third man one should place there a fieldsman possessed of a plentiful amount of dash, and one who is not likely to be hustled. It is imperative that he should be a quick thrower and able to anticipate the batsman's strokes. It is in this position that the importance of throwing *below* the shoulder is so

Point, its Duties and Difficulties

apparent, for he is generally selected by the batsman, if he shows the slightest signs of fumbling the ball, as the most likely man to run short runs to. Even if the ball is fielded in the most approved fashion, it is an extremely difficult task to stop two determined runners from stealing a march on him. One has only to field to Hill and Gregory in that position fully to appreciate that difficulty.

The peculiarity of the position is that most balls hit there possess a spin that causes them to swerve from right to left, and that only at the last moment. One can never be certain whether the ball will swerve or not, so that in anticipating a stroke calculations are easily upset. When two batsmen are attempting a short run it is often as well to return the ball to the bowler's end, as the striker has more ground to cover than the non-striker, who has been backing up a yard or two. The two finest "third men" of the day are Trumper and C. O. H. Sewell, both of whom are very quick on their feet, and marvels of accuracy in their returns.

Point, its Duties and Difficulties.

Though "point" is regarded as a somewhat easy position, to fill such is far from being the case. One needs as much skill here as in any other position, and the place, when a good cutting bat is in, is not quite the sinecure that some people are apt to regard it. True it is that running about is seldom required, and that throwing is not indulged in as often as in other positions, and it may be from these reasons that the weak or veteran fieldsman generally seeks seclusion here. Still it is a difficult position to fill. Some points stand much too deep—and this is a very general mistake—ever to bring off a low catch, their idea seeming to be the prevention of runs rather than the overthrow of the batsman. The distance varies according to the style of the batsman, the pace of the wicket, and the character of the bowling. There is no stereotyped spot, but the nearer one can get with impunity, the more chance of success. G. L.

The Duties of Cover-Point

Wright of Derbyshire stands as close in as eight yards even to strong off-side players, and his boldness has afforded him many opportunities that would not have fallen to his lot otherwise.

The Duties of Cover-Point.

The duties of "cover-point" bear a certain resemblance to those of "third man," inasmuch as one has always to be on the tip of one's toes, much in the same way as one would start for a race, in order to be able to dash in to save short runs. No one has to be more alert than he, for he has an enormous area of ground to cover, especially to fast bowling.

By careful observance he is able to pick the right place to stand in—a *most important point*—as a yard or two either way often means the difference between the batsman being run out or not. Directly the ball is hit, or even before, he should be on the move, for he can often by this manœuvre intimidate, or in other words "bluff," a batsman not to attempt runs that he himself knows he could have no possible chance of saving.

Most of the strokes that he has to negotiate—whether they be in the air or on the ground—have a considerable amount of twist on them, and are on that account extremely hard to judge. Hits from a leg-break bowler or a left-hander that go in the direction of cover swerve enormously, and it is not an unusual occurrence for one to shape at a ball with the right hand and find that he has eventually to trust to his left.

Quite the most difficult catches to be dealt with are those that result from mis-hits. They look simple enough, and it is this apparent simplicity that lures unwary fieldsmen to treat them as such, with disastrous results. The picking up and the returning of the ball must be a continuous action, but one should not let one's anxiety lead one into the fatal mistake of trying to return the ball *before* picking it up. To dispose of an opponent single-handed by a smart return from cover is a cricketing joy

Mid-Off and Mid-On

that can scarcely be exceeded, though unfortunately, owing to the unspeculative nature of the batsmen of to-day, the opportunities that occur are few and far between.

• Mid-Off and Mid-On.

“Mid-off” and “mid-on” have very similar duties to perform, and as the ball invariably comes straight, both have easy positions in the field. The ball at times is driven very hard in these directions, but on account of being met with the full face of the bat, has little or no spin on it. Their principal duties consist of backing up the bowler and saving short runs. “Mid-off” is a particularly “showy” place, but one that does not tax one’s judgment to any considerable extent.

Short-Leg.

So accurate has bowling become that excepting on “sticky” or “crumbling” wickets the position of “short-leg” is dispensed with. On bad wickets it is an important position, especially to “off-break” bowlers, as the ball on account of the break is more often played there than anywhere else. One has to be continually on the move, and must not be afraid to stand close in when the batsman is essentially a forward player, as this type of player finds it very difficult to keep the ball down on a bad wicket. Quite the most dangerous position in the field, it requires a safe pair of hands, and quick eyesight.

Long-Leg.

The prevalence of leg-break bowling has resulted in the revival of a position that in the old days was felt to be indispensable, namely, “long-leg.” Its duties differ so slightly from those of long-on and long-off that one is able to allude to them as the “long-field.”

Fielding “in the country” differs from fielding near the wicket in this respect, that one has more time to judge and to think, and it is this very time for thought

The Merits of Fielding

that often adds to the difficulty of the position. In nine cases out of ten missed catches may be traced to this cause, especially with a fieldsman who is troubled with nerves. He has time to think of many things that may happen even after he has correctly judged the flight of the ball. He knows that if he misses it he will earn not only the disgust of his side, but also the contempt of the spectators, and in consequence he is rather apt to lose his head at the critical moment. Let anything distract his attention in the slightest degree, and his chances of holding the catch are very vague.

The attributes that go to make up a successful long-field are fast running, strong throwing, accurate judgment, and the safest of safe hands. A good long-field—one that is never beaten no matter how impossible the saving of a boundary may look—can, and often does, save more runs than any fieldsman, with the exception of the wicket-keeper.

The Merits of Fielding.

Fielding yields to no branch of the game in attractiveness both to spectators and cricketers themselves. A batsman can never be certain of scoring, neither can a bowler be sure that he will meet with any success, but a fieldsman always possesses the knowledge of being able to render some service to his side, either in the saving of runs or the holding of catches.

A good fieldsman may produce no material result on the score sheet, but he has the consolation of knowing that *runs saved are runs made*, and often faces the bowlers with thirty or forty runs to his credit before he even takes his guard. Too much importance cannot be attached to this branch of the game, and stringent methods should be taken by clubs in general to enforce proficiency in this respect. Remove the undue prominence bestowed on batting, then the decadence of fielding would be a nightmare of the past, and drawn games would be appreciably diminished.

CHAPTER VI

Left-Handed Batting

By C. L. TOWNSEND.

Who should play Left-Handed.

GENERALLY speaking, it should be only those whose left hand is the stronger who would play left-handed, yet there are an obstinate few who, even though right-handed, refuse to recognise the wisdom of their forefathers, and take upon themselves to say that the correct way of playing with two hands is from left to right, or, as we say, left-handed. I can well remember reading, when I was at Clifton College, an article commenting on the strange occurrence of a player bowling right hand but batting left. It amused us very much at the time, as we had three players in our school side who did this very thing. Since then there are as many right hand left-handers as genuine left-handers, and included in their numbers are such players as "Clem." Hill, "Joe" Darling, H. G. Garnett, V. T. Hill, Killick, Kinncir, and the writer of this article. Still there is no reason to draw any distinction between the two kinds, for we all come within the title of "Kicky Handers."

Advantages and Drawbacks.

It is not my object to persuade others that they should play left-handed, but rather to show how great are some of the advantages that we left-hand batsmen enjoy.

I should feel more confidence, perhaps, in recommending a boy to bat left-handed, if it were not for certain disadvantages he would be subject to, apart from cricket.

There are no Special Methods

In the first place, he will find it practically impossible to excel at hockey, for its rules provide that no player shall play left-handed, as a left-hander would bat at cricket. The rules are naturally made for the majority, and it would be plainly impossible for both right and left-handers to play hockey together without many serious collisions.

As far as the actual play is concerned, it does not matter being left-handed at golf, but it certainly is a great nuisance to find, if you happen to be away without your clubs and want a round, that you can't borrow any, as is generally the case. Comparatively speaking, very few left-hand clubs are made, and consequently in buying you have a very small choice to select from, and you are unfortunate in never being able to find a club "that exactly suits you" in a friend's bag; a favourite way of getting a good bat.

There are no Special Methods.

However, these are very minor considerations. If you study the literature of cricket in the hope of finding any learned disquisition on the art of batting left-hand, you will as far as my knowledge goes be disappointed, and indeed there is no need of any separately written treatise. Everything that has been written about batting is equally applicable to both right and left hand batting.

Some Misapprehensions.

It has often been said, and is still said, that left-hand batsmen have certain characteristics that are peculiar to themselves. This is not so; they have not any strokes that are not also played by right-hand batsmen, though they may have some strokes that are brought into prominence owing to the conditions under which they bat.

Perhaps the most common, and at the same time the most incorrect, opinion about left-handers is, that they have a natural tendency to pull. As a boy, I can well

The Half-Volley Pull

I remember hearing a great cricketer say, when speaking about a left-hander, "Oh, he has the regular left-hand stroke." I soon learnt that this meant a somewhat wild pull to leg.

At the time that this was said the science of pulling, at any rate the half-volley, was practically unknown. There were a few players in the front rank, like Dr. E. M. Grace, who did so, but then they were noted for it. As a stroke to play and practise it was not looked upon with favour. This, however, naturally led me to believe that all left-hand bats had this bad failing, and I almost pitied myself, and wished that I was right-handed. Fortunate enough to watch a great deal of County Cricket, I was given the opportunity of finding out for myself whether the good left-hand batsman did in fact pull. It came as a great comfort to find that the only good left-hand batsmen that I saw appeared to have no desire to make this wild hit to leg, said to be so characteristic. They were Mr. J. Cranston, Bobby Peel, Scotton, and later Mr. F. G. J. Ford. Since that time I have played with all the left-hand batsmen of any note, and am fully convinced that this idea is fallacious and without foundation.

The Half-Volley Pull.

Curiously enough, whereas the half-volley pull has now become a common stroke among right-hand players, it is not made by left-handers, though I am told that that dashing left-hander Washington is a striking exception to this statement.

It is not really difficult to see how this idea arose. There were very few left-hand bats in the early days of cricket. The few there were were left-hand bowlers, who invariably went in at the end of the innings. With the exception of "Ben" Griffiths, Scotton, Killick, and perhaps Emmett, it is hard to recall good left-hand batsmen who played at that time. Consequently the style of left-handers was not of the best.

Disadvantages of Left-Hand Play

It is not inconceivable that this, perhaps in rather more forcible language, would have been said about right-handers if the last few on a side had been taken as specimens of right-hand batting.

Left-handers are only accused of possessing one other bad fault, namely, that they cannot play on a sticky wicket. I will deal with this later on. They are, however, credited with great powers of hitting on the off side, and especially with a peculiar stroke, half-cut half-drive, between third man and extra cover-point. We cannot claim this stroke as peculiar to left-handers. It is not. I will admit that we do make it more frequently than right-handers, but this is entirely owing to the position that left-handers take at the wicket, for most right-hand bowlers break back, that is, away from the left-hand player, and it is this kind of ball that is so easily played in this way. Right-hand players all make this stroke, and particularly off fast left-hand bowlers. It is the left-hander's change of front, so to speak, that is responsible for whatever differences there are. Now for the disadvantages and advantages that they are heir to.

Some Disadvantages of Left-Hand Play.

First, then, I will deal with the disadvantages. It is plain that every bowler is the exact converse to a left-hander that he is to a right-hander; what is a leg break to one is an off break to the other, and *vice versa*. Hence it follows that nearly all the right-hand bowlers bowl leg breaks to left-handers. Now a leg break is admittedly the harder break to play, and accounts for the difficulty of left-hand bowlers, their natural break being a leg break to right-handers.

Much Depends upon the Direction of the Bowler's Break.

It would be interesting, if it were possible, to see how the best right-hand players would fare against such

The Bowler's Break

bowlers as Lockwood, Richardson, or Jack Hearne, were the break reversed. I feel confident that for some little time these bowlers would reap a goodly harvest of wickets. This is without doubt a great difficulty that has to be overcome at the outset by all left-handers if they wish to make any runs, and from its very difficulty would appear to be a decided disadvantage; yet it has really a large share in the making of good left-hand batsmen, for they are compelled to watch leg breaks very carefully, to play them and master them, until, owing to the constant practice, what was once a difficulty becomes a blessing in disguise.

A very celebrated right-hand batsman, whose opinion carries much weight, said to me not many years ago that left-handers could not play on sticky wickets. He based his reasons on the very point I have been writing about, namely, that left-handers have to play fast leg breaks, which is, as he said, "a very difficult thing to do." If he is right, this is a curious disadvantage in our uncertain English climate; but I cannot agree with him. I think rather that they are favoured on them, and that this is one of their advantages, as I shall endeavour to show when dealing with the point.

There is another disadvantage that occasionally exists, which I will not pass over. The majority of bowlers bowl over the wicket, and there are a considerable number who find that they cannot help running up in the line of the wicket after they have delivered the ball, and consequently cutting up the wicket with their spikes. As they generally manage to keep a foot or more wide of the wicket, these footholes do not affect right-hand batsmen, but they stare a left-hander in the face.

To explain my meaning I will give an example. In the Gentlemen and Players match at Lords in 1900, C. J. Kortright, who as you know runs at a great pace when he bowls, had made a foothole about a foot and a half wide of the leg stump, and about four yards up the wicket. This was all that Rhodes wanted for the poor

Some Advantages

left-hander, who happened to be the writer. The wicket was otherwise quite perfect. Of the first six balls he bowled to me, four pitched in this hole and broke back like lightning, one of them hitting me on the chin; the other two just missed it and went on straight, and I was hopelessly stuck up. I managed to survive for an over or two, but was finally bowled with one that hit my leg stump. I have lost my wicket more than once from this cause, and I have no doubt that other left-handers have experienced similar misfortune.

Right-handers are seldom affected by this, for nothing would be more unsportsmanlike than to allow a bowler to go on round the wicket if he cannot keep from following up the wicket after he has bowled.

Some Advantages.

The disadvantages of batting left-hand are soon lost sight of when one comes to look into the advantages. It must be fully realised, in the first place, that all our English bowlers learn to bowl, and generally do bowl, to right-handers, for they outnumber the left-handers by quite a hundred to one. It does not require much knowledge of the game to see that what is a good ball for one may be a very bad ball for the other. For instance, it is clear that those bowlers who have learnt to pitch either on or just outside the off stump, breaking in or away, must not continue to do so to a left-hander, for the off stump becomes the leg stump, yet such is the force of habit and continued practice that they find when a left-hander comes in, that they cannot help getting back to the old spot every now and then, and consequently they bowl many loose balls, which does not tend to make them bowl better.

In left-hand bowlers this is particularly noticeable. What would be a splendid ball for a right-hander, one pitching on the off stump and breaking away, should be, and generally is, a certain four for a left-hander. Many

Bowlers Fail to Adapt Themselves

good bowlers candidly confess that they can't bowl to a left-hand bat or get out of the old groove. So much the better for left-handers !

Böwlers Fail to Adapt Themselves.

It is this inability of bowlers to adapt themselves that has done so much in developing the strength of the left-hand batsmen on the leg side. If a left-hander goes and has a practice at the nets, as a rule he gets about one in five on the off side, and that only after frequent entreaty. I can well understand that it must be exceedingly difficult for a practice bowler, after bowling for an hour or two at one spot, to have suddenly to change and bowl quite differently. At all events they very seldom succeed.

It may be urged that to really first-class bowlers this would make no difference ; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and I am referring to all bowlers, for even the best find that they cannot bowl as well to left-handers. See, for instance, how our English bowlers fared in Australia, when opposed by those two wonderful left-hand players, Hill and Darling. It is acknowledged that they did not nearly bowl at their best against them. They seemed to be "all at sea," as a cricketer put it to me who saw the matches out there.

Of all the advantages we have, this is by far the most important, for the better the bowling is the harder it is to make runs ; and while nothing is more encouraging for the batsman than to hit a loose ball for four, nothing is more discouraging for the bowler. This also tells to the advantage of left-handers on sticky wickets. A good bowler on a sticky wicket has the batsmen more or less at his mercy. How good then it is to find that he is not bowling his best to you, and that if only you can stay in, a loose ball is sure to come, such as a right-hander could hardly hope for.

The Worry of Crossing Over

Left-Hand Bowlers no Terror to Left-Handers.

Another great advantage that a left-hand batsman has on a sticky wicket, is that a left-hand bowler, the most feared of all, is no more difficult to him than any other, in fact rather easier if anything. The bad ball that left-hand bowlers send down is one pitching on the leg stump and breaking into the left-hander's legs. Owing to the big break on a sticky wicket, this becomes a very bad ball, which you may often hit for four.

In addition to the difficulty bowlers find in bowling, they are further handicapped by the inability of some of their fielders to field to left-hand batsmen. This more especially applies to the wicket-keeper and the slips. It must be very difficult for a wicket-keeper, for he has to stand the opposite way and take everything in a left-handed way. I have often heard them bemoaning and grumbling when a left-hander comes in. From my own experience I can testify how awkward it is to field slip to a left-hander; everything seems to come differently, and this accounts for many a dropped catch. There is nothing like having an excuse.

The Worry of Crossing Over upsets the Field.

Further, if a left-hander settles down and looks like staying in, the fielders begin to get weary of having to cross over, and are very often not in their places. This annoys the bowler, for it certainly is aggravating to wait while your fielders slowly cross over, and then to have to keep on telling them to get in their right places.

Left-Handers have practically a New Pitch.

There is another advantage that is not generally taken into account or even noticed, arising from the fact that a left-handed batsman is playing on quite a different portion of the wicket. For on a hard wicket it is only the leg break bowlers who will pitch at all on that part of the

Bowling Round the Wicket

wicket where the bowlers will pitch for a left-hander. This is often of wonderful assistance, especially when the wicket has crumbled. I have seen, when right-handers had been struggling for runs, owing to the ball flying about on the crumbled wicket, a left-hander go in and play away as if nothing was the matter. This will enhance his reputation, but in many cases it is very largely owing to the fact that he is batting on quite a different wicket from the others. I can speak to this point from very careful observation, and have frequently felt the benefit of it.

Bowling Round the Wicket.

During the last few years there have arisen a certain number of leg break bowlers who have followed the example of lob bowlers like Mr. Jephson, who is in truth a leg break bowler. They bowl round the wicket, and pitch their balls wide on the leg side breaking in towards the wicket, and consequently have all their fielders placed on the leg side. This has proved a veritable stumbling-block to many, for it is very dangerous to hit to leg, for fear of being caught by the numerous fielders dotted about the boundary, and very hard to make runs in any other way.

Armstrong, the Australian, who was hardly ever put on even in his club matches, adopted this method with great success. It is on these occasions that a left-hander comes in so useful. Such a bowler is quite at a loss to know what to bowl, as everything is reversed, and whatever sort of stuff he does send down, it is quite different from what he is accustomed to bowl, and of very little use. It is well, then, to remember, if a bowler of this kind is getting a side out, to put in a left-hander if one is available, for he will surely save the situation if he is any good at all.

I feel confident that the points I have been able to deal with are worth consideration, and that cricketing fathers should rather encourage than discourage those of

Some of the Principal Left-Handers

their boys who seem inclined to follow the minority and bat left-handed. They receive many benefits and advantages in the cricket world, and in the very smallness of their numbers lies their chief strength. As exceptions they are invaluable; let them not multiply, but remain this small and happy band.

Some of the Principal Left-Handers.

So scarce are good left-handers that have played, that some two dozen names will cover them, and I am thus enabled briefly to mention them all. My own experience does not carry me back very far, but Dr. W. G. Grace and my father have told me of the skill of "Ben" Griffiths and of Killick of Sussex (a relation, I believe, of the fine little left-hander who is playing for Sussex at the present day), and may be of one or two more, but singularly few were the left-hand batsmen in those days.

Later we come to Scotton, the most patient player that has ever held a bat, and almost the most difficult to get out. The only time I met him was shortly before he died; he happened to be umpiring for the M.C.C. when they were playing Clifton College at Clifton in 1894. I was in I don't know how long for 92, much to his delight, and he insisted on bowling to me for ten minutes after the day's play was over. I must have taken him back a good many years.

I cannot pass by Tom Emmett, the hero of every cricket yarn, for he was a fine free bat, and quite capable of making a century. In fact, he is one of the many who have done so against poor Gloucestershire. Of course his name reminds me of a tale, and one that I loved to hear my father tell. The incident happened on the Cheltenham College ground in 1876, during the wonderful innings by W. G. of 316 not out. When he had made well over the 200, he at last hit up a catch off Emmett's bowling, and quite an easy one. Alas! it was missed, the ball was thrown back to poor Tom, and while it lay on the ground near the wicket he, in disgust, threw

Some of the Principal Left-Handers

his cap at it, and then savagely kicked at his cap. Unfortunately he kicked the ball under the cap so hard that it reached the boundary ! Four more runs, but what did it matter ?

Next in order of time comes "Jimmy" Cranston, for he played in his young days in the early matches of Gloucestershire cricket, though it was not till some years after that he really showed his best form, after Warwickshire, in fact, had practically discarded him. In 1890 he had a wonderful year, and won the great distinction of representing England against Australia at the Oval.

I think I am correct in saying that only two left-handers have ever been chosen for England for their batting alone. Cranston had a great variety of strokes, and is at the present day quite capable of making a hundred in the best company, although hardly as active as he used to be.

"Bobby" Peel was so great a bowler that we are apt to forget what a fine bat he was. I feel sure that if he had lost his bowling he would soon have made himself good enough for any team for his batting alone. As it was, he played many fine innings, and loved to make runs on a big occasion when they were badly wanted. His wonderful form in 1896 is still fresh in my mind, especially in May, when he made 210 not out against Warwickshire on the occasion of the record score, 111 against Sussex, and numerous forties and fifties.

I always regret that I never saw that famous left-hand player F. M. Lucas. He unfortunately died quite young, for he was only twenty-seven when he fell a victim to cholera, but a week after he had landed in India on a visit. In 1885 he was one of the best bats in England, and made 215 not out for Sussex against Gloucestershire at Brighton. Having never seen him, I cannot say how he compares with the best left-handers of to-day, but he must be very well in the running for first place.

Although few in numbers, left-handers are very well represented among the big hitters in English cricket by H. T. Hewitt, F. G. J. Ford, and V. T. Hill. Mr. Hewitt

Best English Left-Hand Batsman

was a really great bat, and was almost the equal of G. L. Jessop in the way he demoralised the bowlers. When he once got off the mark it was heart-rending to bowl to him, for the better the ball the harder he hit it. The first time I played against him he made a wonderful hundred at Taunton, a ground he loved above all others. Somerset were indeed unfortunate so early to lose his services.

The Best English Left-Hand Batsman.

To F. G. J. Ford, however, must pride of place be given as the best left-hand bat that England has produced, for I cannot compare him with F. M. Lucas. I have never seen any one bat like him; he is a player quite by himself. With his enormous reach he smothered everything, and with his easy and quiet swing would bang the ball to the ropes without any apparent effort. A master of timing, shall we ever see such another driver? On a cold day the safest place to field when he was in was short slip. It always seemed to me that he improved every year he played, and it was only his continued ill-health that prevented him from doing even more wonderful things in the cricket world than he did.

Although I could not class V. T. Hill with either Hewitt or Francis Ford, yet he was a colossal smiter, a terror in his day, the hero of a wonderful hundred in the 'Varsity match, the absolute master of "Dick" Attewell, and just the man to win a match for his side. His cricket, too, has been sadly interfered with by ill-health.

From my own experience I can say practically nothing about Bagshaw, yet I cannot possibly leave him out of my list, for his performances for Derbyshire prove him to be a very fine player. I have it in my head that he was particularly fond of making his century against Yorkshire, but having no statistics by me I cannot be certain that this is correct.

There are a good number of very good young left-hand batsmen playing at the present day. Kinneir of Warwickshire has made a great name for himself as a steady

Best English Left-Hand Batsman

player. He has a beautiful, easy style, playing very straight, and timing the ball to perfection. He is a very slow scorer, but not tedious to watch. It always seemed to me that this is chiefly owing to his inability to place the ball on the off side. Unless you hit the ball very hard, you will never get through the fielders without being able to place it to a nicety. I may be wrong, but he gave one the idea of playing at the fielders, rather than between them.

Killick, of Sussex, is a very fine player when he is in form, and has been invaluable to his County. He has been much hampered by his eyesight, and though by means of glasses he has remedied this in a great measure, yet they are a great handicap in themselves.

Lancashire are rich in left-handers just at present. Hallows and Hibbert I have hardly seen, but H. G. Garnett was at Clifton College with me, though somewhat my junior. He showed himself to be a first-class player immediately he started County Cricket, and in 1901 had a wonderfully successful season. If he only could have given up his time to cricket he would have made a great name for himself.

John Gunn has been a great disappointment to me in his batting. I can't understand why he does not do better, for he has all the makings of a great bat. It is the old story over again, that there are very few who, after doing all the bowling, can go in and make runs. However, I look for many a hundred from him.

Llewellyn I have not seen play since he came to America with us in 1899, before he was qualified for Hampshire. He has done great things since then, and, without having the physique, must be a player very much after the style of H. T. Hewitt. He scores at a tremendous pace, and serves all bowlers alike when he begins. It is really wonderful the number of runs he has made for Hampshire, considering the endless hours he has had to bowl. •

Last on my list of English left-handers is Washington; last season he had a most wonderful record. Time after time he came to the rescue of his side with a wonderful

The Best Left-Hander

innings on a wicket that no one else could play on. May he delight the Yorkshire crowds by his daring hitting for many years to come.

The Best Left Hander.

It is to Australia that the honour must be given of producing the best left-hander. There have been four exceptionally good Australian left-handers—Moses, W. Bruce, "Joe" Darling, and "Clem." Hill. I never saw Moses play, though he once put on over 200 with my brother in a local match at Torquay, and I know but little of Bruce. Both of them, from all accounts and their records, must have been very fine players. About the other two much could be said. Both of them are worthy to represent the left-handers; but which is the better? Personally, I award to Hill the distinction of being the best left-hander that has ever played. Perhaps he is not so attractive to watch as Darling, and certainly not so powerful a hitter; but he is sound, sound every inch of him. He never gets flurried, and though he may not score rapidly, yet he never scores slowly. He is a wonderful placer on the leg side, a very sure cutter, and a brilliant driver; indeed, I shall never forget the terrific drive he made when Charles Fry caught him out in front of the pavilion at Lords during that disastrous Test Match in 1899.

Both Hill and Darling and several English left-handers might well be compared with the famous right-hand players; but I must not get outside the circle of left-handedness! With such representatives as these, left-handers may well feel proud, and can confidently hold their own in any cricket. Let the ambitious left-hander of the future remember, if it is any inducement, that as we are so few it is almost as easy for him to become the best left-hand batsman in his own particular sphere as it was for a well-known Portuguese cricketer to gain the title of being "the best cover-point in Spain."

CHAPTER VII

Three Useful Strokes

The Cut—the Glide—the Pull

BY K. S. RANJITSINHJI.

The Cut.

THE fact that a batsman who is fairly strong in his defensive play can make a great many runs, even in the highest-class cricket, without making use of any scoring stroke other than the cut, proves at once how valuable a stroke this is. And the cut has this other great recommendation, that in order to make it the batsman need expend very little muscular effort; indeed, a batsman who is a master-hand at cutting can score almost as fast as a very hard hitter without tiring himself a quarter as much.

What to Guard Against.

On the other hand, there are two points against cutting; one is, that it is a dangerous stroke for any one to cultivate who has not a considerable natural aptitude for it; the second is, that even if you are a natural cutter, and have as far as possible perfected yourself by much practice, you are never quite as safe with this stroke as with hits in front of the wicket, because a cut always requires the utmost accuracy in timing, and allows scarcely any margin for error. You can slightly mistime a hit or a forward stroke, and yet be safe enough, but if you mistime a cut you are almost sure to offer a catch to the wicket-keeper, or third man, or one of the slips.

However, the cut is a beautiful stroke which every

Varieties of the Cut

batsman should learn to play; having once learnt it, he can exercise discretion in the extent to which he uses it in matches.

Varieties of the Cut.

Some people consider that there are three kinds of cut—the forward, the square, and the late; but on the whole I have come to think that the forward cut, a stroke from which the ball travels well in front of point, is really more of a drive, though it resembles a cut in being made chiefly with the wrists. The square cut sends the ball either past point, square with the wicket, or else somewhat farther round towards third man. The late cut goes well behind third man, between that fieldman and the slips, or even as fine as through the slips.

The Square Cut.

The square cut can be made off almost any ball within easy reach outside the off stump, provided it is pitched sufficiently short for the batsman to see it pitch, and as it rises up from the pitch past him. It need not be at all a bad length short ball, for the best cutters can make the stroke off balls that are quite a good length; but no one can safely cut a ball that is so far pitched up that his eye cannot follow it on the rise.

The stroke is made by moving the right foot across the wicket until it is in a line with the off stump, or thereabouts, and by clipping the ball with a half-downward, half-sideway flick of the wrists, just as it passes your body. The force with which you make the stroke is not a matter of strength, but of exact timing. To cut well you should aim at being quick and exact rather than at being forcible.

As the ball is rising when you hit it, you must be very careful to get as much over it as possible; for it has a tendency to fly upwards off your bat, even when you seem to yourself to be imparting no upward motion as

The Late Cut

you strike. The bat ought to come down from above, rather as though you were trying to knock the ball into the ground quite close to yourself. Batsmen who take a genuine sideways slash at the ball gain somewhat in strength, but they lose much more in safety. If you time the ball properly you can make it travel very fast to the boundary, however much you come downward upon it.

The Late Cut.

The late cut is really quite a different stroke from the square cut. The right foot is put across the wicket in the same way, but the ball is hit, not as it is passing you, but distinctly after it has passed. The square cut, although it is made with the wrists, involves also a certain amount of sweep of the arm, and perhaps a little push from the elbow and shoulder. The late cut is done purely and absolutely with the wrists; just a quick, downward tap, very sharp and very flicky.

There are some players who cause the ball to travel in exactly the same direction either by, so to speak, pushing at it, or by slipping it. But these strokes are not cuts. In a genuine late cut the bat hits the ball, whereas in pushing or gliding the ball through the slips, the ball is allowed to hit the bat.

A Word of Warning.

I must say, the push or the glide through the slips is a stroke which I do not at all like, and I advise batsmen not to attempt to play the ball behind third man unless they can acquire the power of genuinely cutting it with a flick of the wrists.

There are very few people who are really good late cutters. There is no doubt that the stroke requires exceptional strength, and suppleness of wrist. Players who are not thus gifted do better, I think, to confine themselves to the square cut.

The Glide or Glance Stroke

Cultivate Position.

One great point in learning to cut well is to cultivate a knack of getting into position, with the right leg across the wicket, so quickly that you are ready there in a steady posture before the ball reaches the spot where your bat will meet it. Batsmen who move across not before the ball but after it, are usually unsafe in their cutting; they appear to be feeling for the ball, instead of standing over it.

Cut only on a Fast Wicket.

It should be thoroughly understood that the cut is a stroke which is of very little use indeed except on fast wickets. The whole secret of the stroke consists in using the pace of the ball as it is bowled, and so diverting it into your stroke. On slow and dead wickets, where the ball comes sadly off the pitch, it is very difficult to get any power into a cut.

The Glide or Glance Stroke.

There is another stroke which is very economic in energy, and that is the glide or glance. I know that some good judges do not believe in gliding balls that are pitched on the leg side of the wickets; they prefer the genuine leg hit, either square or fine. But I have always had a great liking for the glide, because the stroke does not tire you, and because you can place it in so many directions behind the wicket. It is, of course, a stroke which you cannot play with any effect except on fast wickets; for, as in the case of the cut, the force of the stroke depends almost entirely upon the pace with which the ball comes from the pitch.

Two Distinct Methods.

There are two ways of playing the glide, namely, either forward or back.

The Forward Glide

The Forward Glide.

The forward glide is suitable for balls which are pitched up to you far enough to make you feel that you ought to play forward at them. And, of course, the ball should pitch outside the leg stump, or else, if it pitches on the wicket, should be breaking away to the leg side. You make the stroke by simply playing forward at the ball, and then, just as it meets the bat, turning the face towards the on side, so that the ball glances off it at an angle. The more you turn your bat the finer the ball will travel; but you do not have to turn your bat nearly as much as you would think in order to glance the ball quite fine.

Some players step across the wicket with their left foot when playing forward to glide, but this is not really necessary.

What to Avoid.

The great point to avoid in playing the forward glide is making your stroke too soon. If you push forward too soon you are liable to make too much of a stab at the ball, and give a catch either to mid-on or to short-leg. Another point to avoid is turning your bat so much that the ball meets not the face at all, but the edge. I have seen batsmen, in trying the stroke, play the ball back, an easy catch to the bowler, plumb off the edge of the bat.

The Back Glide.

In order to glide a ball which is pitched too short for you to play forward at it, you simply wait where you are and slip the ball past you on the leg side by presenting your bat to the ball with the face at an angle. The difficulty of the stroke, such as it is, consists in arranging your feet and body so that you can see the ball right on to the bat.

If you stand precisely in the position you have taken

The Writer's Own Method

up in waiting for the bowler to bowl, you will probably find that your left shoulder obstructs your vision of the ball just at the moment when it is meeting the bat. It is necessary, therefore, to move round a little on your feet, so that you are facing the bowler.

Perhaps the simplest way is to step a little towards the wicket with your right foot and then quickly draw your left foot up to it, at the same time turning to face the ball full; you can then play the ball just in front of your legs with a little half push, half turn of the bat.

The Writer's Own Method.

The way I play the stroke myself is different. I step across the wicket a little with my left foot, put my bat in front of my right leg behind my left calf, and then just as the ball comes to the bat I pivot round on the toe of my right foot, turning the other part of my body towards the on side. But I would not recommend this method to any one to whom it does not come naturally.

A Similar Stroke.

There is a stroke which is often confused with this back play glide; it is what may be called playing back to place the ball on the on side. When you have acquired some efficiency in back play, you will find that often, especially on slow wickets, you have time not only to stop the ball, but also to play it away between mid-on and short-square-leg. This stroke is made by giving a sharp turn to the wrists just as the bat meets the ball. It is a very useful stroke, but it is quite different from the glide, because, instead of letting the ball glance off the bat, you force the ball away by your wrist work.

The Pull or Hook Stroke.

It has always seemed to me rather a mistake that batsmen should be taught that, under all circumstances,

When and How to Pull

it is a bad thing to pull: It is indeed bad to try to pull a ball that is not suitable for the stroke, just as it is bad to try to cut a ball that is not suitable for cutting. But properly applied, the pull is a good and scientific stroke.

The great thing to recognise is, that you ought never to try and pull a ball unless, either from the nature of the bowling, or from the state of the wicket, you have plenty of time to watch the ball from the spot where it pitches right up on to your bat. And, of course, until you are very expert, you ought not to attempt pulling any ball that is not rather short pitched.

The stroke I am alluding to is not the rustic slog at the pitch of the ball with a cross bat. The pull I treat of here is what is usually called the hook stroke.

When and How to Pull.

Having seen that the ball will pitch short, and knowing that it will not come fast off the pitch, the player moves slightly back with his right foot across the wicket, faces the ball almost square, and, as it rises towards him, sweeps it round to the on side with a horizontal bat. He watches the ball right up to the bat, so that if at the last moment he finds he cannot safely hook it round, he can just stop it with an ordinary back stroke.

Need of Discretion.

Many people regard the hook as a very difficult stroke, but it is so only if you pick the wrong kind of ball for it. If the wicket is slow you can easily hook any short pitched ball, if only you step sufficiently across your wicket with your right foot for your bat to be well on the off side of the line of the ball.

Needless to say, you cannot hook a ball that pitches off the wicket on the off side, unless it breaks a good deal in towards you. It is, by the way, rather dangerous to try to hook left-hand bowlers who break away from you, and leg break bowlers who twist across the wicket. The

A Good Stroke on Wet Wickets

easiest ball to hook is a short pitched one from a right-hand bowler that pitches somewhere about on the middle-and-off and breaks well in towards you.

A Good Stroke on Wet Wickets.

The reason that I mention the hook as a special stroke is that it is far the best scoring stroke on wet wickets, whether dead or sticky. On such wickets a batsman cannot get many runs by the ordinary orthodox forward strokes. He must defend his wicket by back play, and get his runs either by hard driving or by hooking. A man who can hook as well as drive has a great advantage over a man who can only drive ; the latter often finds his strokes completely blocked up by a judiciously placed field, the former can nearly always discover "a way through." Moreover, it is much easier on slow or sticky wickets to keep the ball down by hooking than it is by driving.

CHAPTER VIII

Some Hints on Captaincy

By G. L. JESSOP.

A Brief Disclaimer.

IT may be considered somewhat presumptuous on my part to attempt to expound the art of captaincy. My own actual experience of a captain's duties—extending as it does over a period of five years—has been too short to warrant my laying down laws on the subject: I therefore feel that a word of apology or explanation is desirable before proceeding to deal with so delicate a question.

I may at once state that I have not the least intention to dogmatise. A comparative novice dictating to practised veterans on the art of cricket captaincy would cut as sorry a figure as the sanguine youth of the proverb, who essayed the thankless task of conveying rudimentary instruction to an aged female relative; and with such presumptive folly I have no wish to associate myself. What I intend to do in this chapter is simply to put down such reflections on the necessary qualifications of a successful captain as naturally suggest themselves to any intelligent observer of first-class cricket, who has further the advantage of some personal experience.

Natural Capacity.

Like the poet, the good captain is born, not made, and just as there is at present a great scarcity of first-class poets, so too in the cricket field there is a noticeable dearth of really good captains. The great Australian cricketer G. H. S. Trott was probably the best captain the world has ever seen, and there is little doubt that the success which attended the efforts of the Colonials during

Favourable Circumstances

the visit of the English Eleven to Australia in 1897-98 was largely due to the admirable judgment which he invariably displayed.

Favourable Circumstances.

We must not, however, forget—although we have no wish to detract from his merits—that he was favoured by circumstances in an unusual degree. It is surely an extraordinary advantage to a captain to have five bowlers on his side whose relative superiority is barely distinguishable, and it is hardly too much to say that such a rare piece of good fortune befell the Australian captain.

He had the further advantage of winning and holding the sympathy of the spectators, and any one who is familiar with the peculiarities of Australian cricket knows how much that means. Success bred enthusiasm, and put the spectators on good terms with themselves and with their representatives. The enthusiasm of such crowds as the Australian has an exhilarating effect on their favourites, as their displeasure has a damping one. They take no trouble to conceal their feelings, and their representatives have often found to their cost that they are as frank with their blame as with their praise.

The captain who has the good luck to find them in their sunny mood has a great responsibility taken from his shoulders, and derives from the consciousness of their support a confidence which is of immense value to him in the discharge of his duties. Under such favourable conditions as fell to the lot of the great Australian captain, the duties of the post are greatly facilitated. It is rather in adverse circumstances, where a captain's qualities are more severely tested, that we have the best opportunity of discovering sterling merit. In such a case the post is no sinecure, and it is small wonder that but few excel.

Observant Experience Tells.

Undoubtedly the most telling qualification is a wide and varied experience. Familiarity with the strength

Signs of Success

and weakness of opponents, and with the methods necessary to cope with them, can only be acquired by years of observation. And yet experience alone is not enough. Some men can learn more from a single match than others from a succession of seasons. The good captain must be richly endowed by nature with the faculty of observation. He must not only have the experience, but he must be able to profit by it. He must have his side well under control, and guide their efforts by force of example as well as by actual command.

Signs of Success.

It is easy to tell by the behaviour of a side in the field whether it is well captained or not. Any signs of slackness immediately prove the incompetency of the man at the helm. A keen captain makes a keen fielding side; a slack captain's influence is immediately shown in a lethargic field.

An Alert Temperament.

In a long day's cricket, and particularly when a large score is being completed by a powerful batting side, it is most natural that the attention of the field should wander, and many runs accrue in consequence. Mental despondency and physical fatigue combine to produce a stolid indifference which is fatal to the side, and unless the captain's influence keeps these tendencies in check, a hopeless state of things results. Catches are dropped by sleeping fielders who in ordinary circumstances are considered safe to hold anything in reason, and have frequently been known to do brilliant things; overthrows result from bad backing up, and in many ways an enormous increase is made to the adverse total which might well have been avoided. The captain must be constantly on the alert to check any such tendencies, and if he does so he will often save his side from certain defeat.

A "Varsity Captain"

A "'Varsity Captain."

The position of "Varsity Captain" is in some ways unique. Certain peculiar responsibilities attach to it which fall outside the scope of the ordinary captain. He is not only skipper for the year, but he is also in many ways responsible to past and future members of his university. The whole duty of selecting the eleven devolves upon him. He must be captain *par excellence*, and not merely one of several. He may of course ask advice, but he is in no way bound to take it, and, if he is to achieve any success in his position, he must possess considerable confidence in his own judgment.

His Drawbacks.

When we consider further that the post is only held for a year, and that its holder is in most cases comparatively young and inexperienced, the difficulty of performing the duties attached to it with any considerable measure of success is very great indeed. It may be because of the presumed youth and inexperience of the captain that many well-meaning persons are so free with their suggestions and criticisms. Probably no one receives more communications from all sorts of people, whose passionate interest in the success of the 'Varsity frequently outruns their discretion, and more conflicting criticism and advice than the captain of the 'Varsity Eleven.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and however excellent the motive with which such advice is given, the captain has to go his own way, relying on his own judgment, and disregarding the criticisms of spectators and pavilion cricketers, unless he considers in his own mind that their remarks are justified. A confident captain soon rises above criticism, and gains the confidence of his men. The man, on the other hand, who is disturbed and shaken by every breath of criticism is not likely either to inspire confidence or to deserve it—"the rule of many is no good thing; let there be one ruler."

His Advantages

His Advantages.

But while the post of 'Varsity captain is attended with these peculiar responsibilities, it must be said that he possesses a great advantage over other captains in having the selection of the team left entirely in his hands. He is freed from the trammels of a captious and quarrelsome committee, and can go on the field with the comforting assurance that every member of his team has the approval of his own deliberate judgment. When the question is decided by a majority of committee votes, the captain is placed sometimes in the awkward position of having to play men whom he would have wished to leave out, and such a state of things is not likely to increase his confidence. No doubt the responsibility is great, and the imputation of favouritism is only too readily, and sometimes unfortunately with justice, made; but given an impartial captain—and the sense of weighty responsibility is calculated to make most men sink their prejudices—the advantage of his unfettered action greatly outweighs its drawbacks.

Social Duties.

To return to the general aspect of our subject, it must be noticed that there are a number of social duties associated with the position. A captain has to bestow considerable attention on the entertainment of his opponents. Courtesy demands that he should be early on the ground to await their arrival, and to see that all the necessary arrangements have been made for their fitting reception. There is no worse form imaginable than a late arrival on the part of the home captain, who thus leaves the visiting team to the tender mercies of the groundman.

Be Early on the Ground.

There is a further reason of a different nature which makes it imperative for the captain to be punctual and to

Winning the Toss

have his team early on the ground. A little batting practice before the game commences is invaluable, particularly if the state of the weather causes the wicket to be of other than its usual pace.

Particular Duties. Winning the Toss.

We will now proceed to a more detailed account of the matters with which a captain has to deal when in the field. First comes the very important matter of inspecting the wicket, and deciding what is to be done in the event of winning the toss. An experienced captain is well aware of the vast differences which exist in the nature of different grounds, and in the manner in which they are affected by climatic conditions. Some grounds dry much more quickly than others, and a knowledge of their peculiarities has to be taken into account in making a choice of innings.

Granted good weather and fast wickets, there is no difficulty in deciding what to do; the difficulty only appears when the wickets are wet. Under these circumstances several important points demand consideration. The condition of the ground before the rainfall, the heaviness of the fall itself, the amount of subsequent sunshine, and the extent to which it has affected the turf, have all to be taken into account.

There are several varieties of the wet wicket. One that is wet on the surface merely is essentially a batsman's wicket. It plays easily and truly, and robs fast bowling of all its sting. The bowler is handicapped by a wet ball and a slippery footing, and loses much of his accuracy. Finally, as the dampness disappears with a drying wind and sunshine, the wicket soon reverts to its natural condition. Under such circumstances a captain has no hesitation in taking the first of the wicket.

When, on the other hand, a considerable amount of rain has fallen, and penetrated to some depth below the surface, a problem of more difficulty presents itself. At

Advantage of taking First Innings

first such a wicket is easy. The ball cuts through the turf, and consequently keeps straight, and though run-getting is a slow business, it is easy to maintain a defensive attitude and to wait for the loose balls which must occasionally come from bowlers labouring under serious disadvantages.

If there is no prospect of sunshine it is wise to take first innings, for the ground never becomes difficult. If, however, there is a prospect of bright sunshine, there is a danger that the wicket may be reduced to that condition which delights the bowler's heart, and makes the most undaunted batsman quail. The variety of wicket which is known as the caked or sticky wicket is generally produced by heavy rainfalls overnight and a fierce sunshine in the morning. Under these conditions the batsman is completely at the bowler's mercy. The latter has a prime opportunity of exhibiting all his puzzling tricks, and, aided by the sticky condition of the turf, can make the ball perform the queerest and most unexpected antics. Then it is that the ball "speaks," and that too in language far from pleasant to the batsman's ears. On such a wicket it is always safe policy to make one's opponents bat first, on the principle that the condition of the turf cannot possibly be worse from the batsman's point of view, while there is a possibility of its improvement.

Advantage of taking First Innings.

Except in this last case the advantages of taking first innings are very great, and often go a considerable way in deciding the issue of a match. The side which bats first gets the wicket at its best, and if it takes advantage of its opportunities may in the first venture put defeat out of the question. The batsmen proceed to their work perfectly fresh, and have consequently every opportunity of doing themselves justice. On the other hand, to have to go to the wicket after a long spell of fielding under a blazing sun, is sure to exercise a damaging effect on the

Rolling the Pitch

strongest and fittest player. Physical fatigue is bound to affect his nerve, his quickness of perfection and judgment, and his alacrity of movement.

There is besides the probability that the side which takes second lease of the wicket may have to bat for an hour or so at the close of the day in light which becomes gradually worse and worse, and it frequently happens that some of the most valuable batsmen are dismissed before the day's play is over, in consequence of these unfavourable conditions.

Another important consideration which must not be lost sight of is, that a team always finds it easier to save runs than to make them. The fact of having a good score to their credit seems to give them confidence for their work on the field, while the consciousness of having to battle against a large total compiled by their opponents has an unnerving and disheartening effect.

Rolling the Pitch.

It is hardly possible to leave this question of the different kinds of wickets without a few remarks on the subject of rolling the pitch. It is not always easy to tell which of the two rollers—the heavy or the light—should be employed. When the ground is hard it makes no difference. When the pitch shows signs of crumbling, it is not advisable to use the heavy roller, as it might have the effect of breaking up the wicket. If, on the other hand, we have to do with a sticky wicket, the heavy roller should be used for the purpose of forcing up the water to the surface, and making it easy for a time. On grounds that dry slowly and surely, however, it is safer to employ the light roller, and occasionally it is the best policy to leave the ground alone altogether.

The Order for Batting.

The order of arranging his batsmen is a matter that sometimes tests the captain's judgment. Here, however,

The Best Combination

certain definite principles may be stated which are almost universally followed. It is undesirable for obvious reasons to send together to the wicket two batsmen of similar styles; for example, to start the innings with two slow and steady batsmen, who avoid all risks, and wait doggedly for their opportunities, involves a waste of valuable time. When the wicket is at its best such a pair really fail to make the most of their opportunities, and advance the total at too slow a rate. On the other hand, when two forcing batsmen, who are too free in taking risks, are sent in together, they are apt to compete with each other in rapidity of scoring, and to lose their wickets from carelessness.

The Best Combination.

The best combination with which to start consists of a good defensive player and a forcing batsman. The former is too steady to be seized with a desire to emulate his partner's pace, while the latter plays his ordinary game without attempting record rates, and both together bring the score up with reasonable speed. The rest of the team should be so arranged as to repeat these conditions as far as possible. The hitter of the team should not be sent in earlier than third or fourth wicket. If bowlers are good for runs, the earlier they get their innings the better, so that they may have all the longer time to rest before their work.

Exceptional Cases.

When a satisfactory order has once been obtained, it is advisable as a general rule to adhere strictly to it. There are times, however, when a deviation may be made with advantage. For example, if it is necessary to force the game in order to obtain in limited time the runs required for a win, it is evident that rapid scoring batsmen will be sent in early. Or again, if a side has to play for a draw, the patient steady batsman will take the lead. There are, of course, exceptional cases which do not disprove the general expediency of holding to a definite order.

Choice of Bowlers

Management in the Field.

The questions that we have hitherto discussed are such as present no great difficulty to the majority of captains. It is the management of his side in the field which puts the severest test on a man's efficiency, and which distinguishes a really capable captain. A wide experience of all the intricacies of the game, and a natural capacity for applying it, are absolutely essential. Constant observation enables a captain to acquire familiarity with the methods of his opponents. He learns their strength and their weakness, and has to arrange his bowling resources and his field to check the strong strokes, and lay traps for the weak.

Choice of Bowlers.

He must also take into consideration the condition of the wicket in deciding what bowlers to put on. Fast bowlers are of little use unless they can obtain a firm footing, and besides, a slow wicket robs their bowling of much of its sting. The captain must contrive, as far as he can, to vary the attack. The greater contrast in the action and pace of the bowlers put on together, the more effective are they likely to prove. Perhaps the ideal combination is a fast right and slow left, or *vice versa*. In many cases a batsman loses his wicket at one end because he has been unsettled by the bowling from the opposite wicket.

There is probably no point which exposes captains to more adverse criticism—often ignorant and ill-judged, and based upon subsequent events—than his management of bowling changes. It is undoubtedly a matter which requires great experience and great judgment, and its difficulty is immeasurably increased when a side is comparatively weak in its bowling resources.

“Clock Captains.”

Some captains, to whom the name of “clock captains” has been appropriately if rather unfeelingly applied, dis-

Placing the Field

play a rooted dislike to depart from their usual arrangements. They keep on the same bowlers for a definite length of time no matter what the circumstances or the state of the game may happen to be.

Nothing could be more disastrous. A fast bowler, who might prove extremely useful towards the end of an innings, is kept pegging away without effect at the early batsmen, until he is so fatigued that his power for the day is completely gone. Again, it is equally hopeless to keep on for an indefinite period a bowler who is merely keeping a good length. Such bowling only serves to get the batsman set, instead of helping to bring about his dismissal.

Placing the Field.

The arrangement of the field is another matter in which hard and fast rules will not work. Of course the bowler has to be consulted as to the particular disposition which suits his methods, but a captain can do a great deal towards reducing his opponent's score by applying his knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the various batsmen. The judicious move of placing an extra field to check a favourite stroke frequently results in saving fifty or sixty runs, besides giving an additional chance of getting rid of the particular player. The condition of the wicket has also to be reckoned with. If the ground is soft the field must be placed much closer, and on hard and fast grounds farther from the wicket.

Applying the Closure.

The question of applying the closure is not without difficulties. The character of the team opposed to you has to be considered, for some elevens have much greater talent for knocking off runs quickly than others. The principle which is generally followed is, that an innings should not be declared closed unless there is practically no prospect of the runs being made by your opponents.

A Thankless Task

It is worth while, however, occasionally to run a certain degree of risk. Drawn games are very unsatisfactory, and if there is any reasonable prospect of dismissing your opponents, and only a slight chance of their making the runs, it is certainly good policy to play for a definite result.

A Thankless Task.

The position of captain, like all posts of responsibility, brings with it "more kicks than ha'pence." No doubt one's vanity is flattered by the pleasing sense of dignity and power; but against this has to be set the thanklessness of the position and its exposure to hostile criticism. Few people give a captain credit for a victory. They are always ready to greet individual performances with thunders of applause, but they rarely have sufficient insight to trace the effects of careful organisation, and to observe how much is due to the captain's judgment.

On the other hand, when things go badly, who but the captain bears the brunt of their displeasure? What an incompetent idiot he showed himself in his management of the bowling! What a different result would have followed if the sage critic could have temporarily changed places with him! All these frank and generous criticisms can be heard at any match from disappointed spectators, and the wretched captain knows but too well that, however little he may deserve it, the greater share of the blame will be bestowed on him.

CHAPTER IX

County Cricket

By GEORGE BRANN.

County Club Management.

IN all probability the great majority of people who go to see County matches in the summer do not realise the vast amount of work entailed in the management of a County Club. They possibly imagine that the Committee have only to select eleven players for the matches, see that a few ground bowlers are engaged, hold a few formal Committee Meetings, and hand over the remainder of the work to the Secretary, who, they say amongst themselves, has a very soft billet.

This is very far from being the case. Competition amongst the Counties is nowadays so keen that the management, if they desire to keep pace with the times, are compelled to be busy with the Counties' affairs, not only in the summer, but during the winter.

A Continuous Task.

The playing member at the end of the season puts his cricket paraphernalia away, and betakes himself to other pursuits, or sleeps and dreams of centuries to come. For the Committee there is no rest; they are being called upon to attend meetings throughout the year, and often have to decide the most knotty questions whilst the cricket world in general is slumbering.

Often a Thankless Labour.

County Committees are usually a much-abused body of men. One hears remarks (when the team is doing

Some Historic Retrospect

badly) about the incompetency of the "fossils" who select such unsatisfactory men. These grumblers forget that most of the "fossils" are practical cricketers, and at one time or another have been shining lights in the County Eleven; that they give their services ungrudgingly for the benefit of the public, who ought to support and not cavil at them.

Some Historic Retrospect.

The history of County Cricket is practically a history of cricket. As long ago as 1735, as is recorded, a match was played on Bromcy Common between the Londoners and the men of Kent for £1000.

Evidently the wager was a private one, and did not come out of the "gate"; for the game must have been of short duration, and could not have run into the third day. London made 72 in the first innings; Kent, 95. London, 32, second innings; and the runs required were knocked off by Kent without losing a wicket. We must thus conclude that Kent was Champion County in 1735.

Order of Seniority.

Of the present County clubs, Sussex lays claim to being the oldest. It was formed in 1839. Surrey comes next, formed in 1845; Middlesex, 1857; Kent (first Canterbury week held), 1842; and Hampshire, 1863. County matches, however, were played long before those dates. Hants met Surrey in 1788, and Kent in 1789; but there would appear to have been no regular organisations. Cricket was kept going by the enterprise and enthusiasm of a few county magnates, and the matches were very few and far between.

Dawn of County Cricket.

The idea of centralising cricket in the Counties probably dates from the time when the old All-England Eleven

Gradual Progress

began to collect the best talent, and take them about the country playing exhibition games. The local clubs combined, and raised twenty-two's to meet them. The spectators became imbued with a greater love of the game, and 'brought grist to the mill in the shape of gate-money, and the County authorities were quick to perceive that, with all the best local talent combined, they could give exhibition matches of their own, and thus be independent of touring companies.

A Good Pioneer.

We have, then, to tender our best thanks to William Clark for his enterprise in collecting together such a grand old team, and one which did so much to promote the interests of the game throughout the whole of the country.

Gradual Progress.

The progress of the welding together of the units in each County was nevertheless a slow one. Even as late as 1872 Lancashire only played four matches, viz. home and 'home matches with Derbyshire and Yorkshire. It was not until games were boomed by the Press as competitive that the present feverish interest in County matches took such a hold on the public. It is true that Yorks, Lancashire, and Notts always drew good gates, whilst Gloucestershire (thanks to the heroic W. G.) was becoming more popular; but in the other Counties the interest was very lethargic, and they were so short of funds as to be quite unable to employ a staff of professionals to make the backbone of a side.

Gradually the Southerners worked their way up the ladder. Surrey unearthed a great batsman in Walter Read. George Lohmann suddenly appeared, and Southern talent, which had hitherto been slumbering, awoke. From the time of Surrey's resurrection may be reckoned the rise of Southern cricket.

The Championship Fever

The Championship Fever.

Matches were arranged with the strong Northern Counties, and the magic word "Championship" loomed on the horizon. The other Southern shires, in a spirit of emulation, were stirred into making greater efforts. Counties that had hitherto never been heard of sprang into existence. The innermost country corners were ransacked to find promising colts, and a spirit of rivalry was started, which has reached its culminating point in the absorbing interest taken in championship cricket to-day.

A Council Formed.

In 1887 the Counties, becoming ambitious, formed a representative Cricket Council, primarily for the purpose of amending the rules with regard to County qualification. This was certainly a step in the right direction, for the old rule with regard to a man's residential qualification had been treated with a great breadth of view by not a few of the Counties, over-zealous no doubt for their own interest, and thus to obtain the services of good players who had the misfortune to belong to a non-cricketing shire.

County Qualification.

Their interpretation of the law was, that a man's *bond fide* residence in a County for two years consisted in his depositing an empty portmanteau in a room for that period, paying a shilling a week as rent, and calling it a home.

Classification of Counties.

In 1889 another resolution was passed by the Council, viz. to make an annual classification of Counties, with the object of making a scheme of promotion by merit, under which a County, having proved itself worthy, could

Gate-Money

rise from one class to another. This was the extent of the Council's labour. Its career was short, and not very striking, and the cricket world in general received the news of its peremptory suspension in the following year with no great show of regret.

The M.C.C.

The M.C.C. still continues to have sole control of all questions with regard to cricket reform, and the Counties could not place any problems that might crop up affecting their interests into more impartial hands.

Does Interest Wane?

It has been suggested that interest in County matches during the last few years has been somewhat on the wane. The croakers argue that the proof of this has been shown in the deterioration of the "gates." This may be so, but it will only prove temporary. Certainly in 1901, when the wickets were super-excellent, and caused a large percentage of the matches to be drawn, the cricket on the third day was inclined to become monotonous and uninteresting. In 1902 the falling off was entirely due to the abnormally wet, cold season, and possibly the visit of the Australians had something to do with it. Given a proper English summer, with a fair admixture of dry and sticky wickets, and the interest will be greater than ever.

Gate-Money.

There is no doubt that the question of gate-money is becoming a serious problem to County executives. A wet Bank Holiday will nearly drive the Finance Committee to tears.

Ground Staffs.

Ground staffs have increased tenfold of late, and rich Counties like Yorkshire, Surrey, and Lancashire have

The Toil of Pleasure

quite an army of colts to provide for. The great increase in the number of County matches has made it necessary for the officials to depend more and more on the services of professionals, who are always, as it were, "on tap."

Cricket has become so serious, that it is almost more a business than a pleasure. The result is that very few amateurs (even if they have the inclination) can afford the time to go through a whole season without a break, and it is not given to many of them to have the genius of stepping into first-class cricket minus the necessary practice, and doing justice either to themselves or their side. Hence the Counties are wise to secure the services of the certain starters in the shape of good professionals.

The Toil of Pleasure.

No. County Cricket is not quite the pleasant summer holiday it used to be. Then one had alternate weeks of cricket and rest, which enabled one to visit one's family, pick up the threads of business, and even spend a Sunday in church or in the garden. Now, how different! The Sabbath is more often than not spent in travelling; the garden must perforce look after itself and run to weeds; and business goes to the dogs.

A famous player once had a piteous letter from his gardener informing him that he possessed a wonderful crop of strawberries and cherries which were spoiling for lack of picking, but he was unable to spare even a Sunday, and saw them not.

Cricket will Live.

Yet we shall still continue, and it ought to be the height of every young cricketer's ambition to obtain a place in his County side, and make a century, or he will have missed the opportunity of feeling one of the keenest pleasures this world has to give—the sensation that in the eyes of a multitude he is, for the time being, a hero.

Yorkshire

Yorkshire.

Picture the delight of being considered worthy of a place in the present Yorkshire side! They have stood on a pedestal quite alone for several years. Sussex, Notts, Surrey, and Lancashire have all strong teams; they are often brilliant, but subject to relapses. Yorkshire has but one, and that annually against Somersetshire, which goes to prove that they are, after all, human.

The secret of their success is in the almost uncanny soundness of the side. They may possess a "tail," but it is an uncommon stiff one, and always wagging. Their captain, Lord Hawke, often goes in tenth, but by way of variety promotes himself to first, and scores a century. David Hunter goes in last, but on occasions is ordered to don his pads and keep his end up for that fatal over-night ten minutes, when a valuable wicket is often lost. You will find him at lunch time next day still batting, and he looks as though he will require digging out. Rhodes could get his place as a batsman alone should his bowling ever desert him, a contingency which is very remote.

Sussex.

Sussex ran second on the list last year, and, as a run-getting side, is possibly better than Yorkshire. A team with two such bats as C. B. Fry and K. S. Ranjitsinhji cannot fail to be strong in batting. The bowling, however, is weak. Tate bowled as he had never bowled before, but the lack of a good fast bowler to assist him will always debar the County from attaining the highest honours.

Notts.

Notts had a good year, thanks chiefly to Arthur Shrewsbury, who showed all his old adaptability in making runs on the stickiest of wickets. Wass bowled unplayable balls, but is inconsistent, and the team possesses a decided tail.

Lancashire

Lancashire.

Lancashire have fallen from their high estate. Bowlers of the stamp of Mold and poor Johnny Briggs are not to be developed in a season. Barnes was disappointing, and the batting as a whole lacked soundness. They are, however, lucky in possessing such an astute captain as Archie MacLaren, and with any amount of money, and a fine recruiting ground for colts, they will doubtless soon regain their lost prestige.

Surrey.

Surrey, too, is temporarily under a cloud. 'Tis the same cry. Want of change—or in their case, one might call it want of variety bowling. With their enormous ground staff it is strange that they are unable to discover a slow bowler of merit. When he arises, Surrey will be dangerous.

Their batting on hard wickets is as good as ever, but they appear unable to adapt themselves to slow ones, and have a distinct tendency to collapse. Abel improves with age, and evidently proposes going on for ever. He will doubtless get his 4000 runs in a season before retiring. Both Lockwood and Richardson, as fast bowlers, must be nearing the end of their careers, and if Surrey wish to recover their lost position they must set their bowling house in order.

Kent.

Kent is a disappointing County, always to be feared even by the best side, and especially dangerous in August, when they are able to secure the services of their 'Varsity members, of whom they always have an unlimited supply.

They have just sustained a great loss in the resignation of their captain, J. R. Mason, than whom no keener or harder working cricketer ever played the game. Kent have established a nursery for colts at Tonbridge, which

Essex

shows enterprise, and will no doubt in time produce sterling young stock.

Essex.

Essex, after struggling bravely for years under a load of debt, are blossoming into a sound, dangerous side. Mead is unable to bowl at both ends, much as he would like to; he revels in work, and now that C. J. Kortright has been disabled, gets more than his share of it. Messrs. Perrin and M'Gahy ring the changes in making centuries, and 'tis very rare to find both of them failing to make runs in the same match.

Middlesex.

Middlesex is uncertain. They are seldom able to play the same men in two consecutive matches, and with only two regular bowlers they have to rely chiefly on their batting. Jack Hearn's mechanical arm must wear out in time, and Albert Trott's wiles do not possess such terrors to the uninitiated. Middlesex must spend some of its superfluous funds on the training of young professionals if it has ambition for the Championship.

Other Counties.

The remaining Counties, although not quite up to the standard of the leaders, are steadily advancing in strength, Derbyshire and Hampshire being the two who have the best claims to be reckoned first-class.

Public Regard for Cricket.

One often hears the assertion that too much of the spectacular side is being introduced into modern cricket, and that the public has a surfeit of matches. There is no more certain barometer than the public, and they would be quick to show their disapprobation if this were so. Up to the present the glass is "set fair." This annual grunt is heard in connection with football, but the people still turn out in their thousands to see the game. If

Benefit Matches

harm does accrue, it is more than counter-balanced by the good.

The number of young professionals who gain a livelihood by the game has increased a hundred-fold. They are well paid, and their interests are watched over with almost paternal care by the Counties who employ them, not only during the summer, but through the winter months.

Benefit Matches.

The regular members of the Eleven, before their career is over, are given benefit matches, which, in some cases, bring a reward of 2000 solid sovereigns. Why! 'tis enough to cause the professional of by-gone days to turn in his grave with envy. It is true that some of these benefit matches are spoilt by weather; and the Counties will no doubt devise some scheme by which the professional is less dependent on the elements for his prospective nest-egg.

The Profession.

Taking it altogether, the professional's lot is cast in pleasant places, and he fully deserves all he gets, for a more deserving fellow, or better sportsman, it would be difficult to meet. He plays the game, not only for gain, but for sheer love of it.

Scoring Championship Points.

The system of scoring points in the Championship matches does not give entire satisfaction. Numerous attempts have been made, chiefly by enthusiasts who write to the sporting papers, to devise a better scheme, but up to the present their efforts have been fruitless.

A Suggestion.

Why should not the Counties subscribe and offer a prize for the best idea? Surely out of all the clever mathematical brains in England some sound plan would be evolved.

CHAPTER X

County Clubs and Classification

AT a meeting of County representatives, held at Lord's on Monday, December 5, 1898, the question of amending the rules of County Cricket was left in the hands of the Marylebone Club, who had offered to form a Committee to deal with the matter. The Committee, which, in accordance with a resolution passed by the County representatives, included a representative from Kent, Yorkshire, Surrey, Lancashire, and two minor Counties, was duly formed, and, after long deliberation, the following scheme was agreed to. The M.C.C. Committee approved of the alterations, and in the spring of 1899 the rules as given below were made public.

Practically the only point in dispute had been the residential qualification, it being strongly felt in many quarters that Rule 3 in the old code had been interpreted in a way quite foreign to the intentions of those who framed it in 1873. Hence the far more strict definition of "residence" now put forward. In order, no doubt, to avoid interference with existing qualifications, it was agreed that, except as regards Rule 5, the new rules should not come into operation until the 1st of January 1900.

1. A cricketer born in one County and residing in another may not play for more than one County during the same season.

2. *Qualification by Birth.*—A cricketer is always eligible to play for the County of his birth.

3. *Qualification by Residence.*—A cricketer is qualified to play for any County in which he has resided for the previous twenty-four months, and is residing, but—

(a) The mere acquiring or hiring of a tenement, used as a *bonâ fide* home, does not constitute "residence."

County Clubs

(b) The occupation of a tenement during the cricket season only does not constitute "residence."

4. Where a cricketer uses as residences in the course of the year tenements in more than one County, or where he leaves the County for the winter months, and in all other cases where his qualification is in any doubt, it is obligatory on the County for which he wishes to play to prove his qualification to the satisfaction of the M.C.C.

5. A cricketer who has played for a County for five successive years is qualified to play for that County for the rest of his cricket career, or until he plays for some other County.

6. A cricketer may play for his old County during the two years that he is qualifying for another.

7. *Transfers*.—A cricketer, already qualified for a County, but wishing to qualify by residence for another County, must give notice in writing to the Cricket Club committee of the former County before he commences such residence; and a County Cricket Club wishing to engage, under a residential qualification, a cricketer who is already qualified for another County Club, must inform the Committee of the latter before commencing negotiations with the cricketer.

8. *Appeal*.—Should any question arise under these rules it shall be left to the decision of the Committee of the Marylebone Club, which shall be final.

The following were established as the laws of County qualification, at a meeting held in the Surrey County Pavilion, Kennington Oval, on June 9, 1873, and remained in force until January 1, 1900, when they were superseded by the new rules set forth above. Representatives were present in 1873 from Surrey, Middlesex, Sussex, Kent, Gloucestershire, Yorkshire, and Nottinghamshire—

I. That no cricketer, whether amateur or professional, shall play for more than one County during the same season.

County Clubs

II. Every cricketer born in one County and residing in another shall be free to choose at the commencement of each season for which of those Counties he will play, and shall, during that season, play for that County only.

III. A cricketer shall be qualified to play for any County in which he is residing and has resided for the previous two years; or a cricketer may elect to play for the County in which his family home is, so long as it remains open to him as an occasional residence.

IV. That, should any question arise as to the residential qualification, the same should be left to the decision of the Committee of the Marylebone Club.

V. That a copy of these rules be sent to the Marylebone Club, with a request that they be adopted by the Club.

The County qualification was discussed at a meeting of the County Cricket Council, held in the Pavilion at Lord's on December 10, 1888. Representatives were present from the following nineteen Counties:—Surrey, Kent, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Middlesex, Sussex, Derbyshire, Essex, Leicestershire, Cheshire, Hampshire, Norfolk, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Somerset, Hertfordshire, and Staffordshire. It was carried unanimously that—

“For purposes of County cricket, County boundaries are not affected by the Local Government Act, 1888.”

And on the motion of Sussex, seconded by Gloucestershire, it was decided by ten votes to five that—

“During the two years a cricketer may be qualifying to play for another County under the residential qualification, he shall be allowed to play for the County for which he has previously been playing under that rule.”

In consequence of the passing of this latter resolution the rules of County Cricket were modified by the addition of the words: “That a man can play for his old County during the two years that he is qualifying for another.”

County Classification

County Classification.

A special meeting of County secretaries, called together by Yorkshire to discuss the subject of County classification, was held in the Pavilion at Lord's on Tuesday, the 1st of May 1894. Mr. H. Perkins occupied the chair, and there were present—Mr. M. J. Ellison and Lord Hawke (Yorkshire), Messrs. W. E. Denison and C. W. Wright (Notts), Mr. A. J. Webbe (Middlesex), Mr. F. Marchant and Mr. A. J. Lancaster (Kent), Mr. C. W. Alcock (Surrey), Messrs. W. Newham and W. L. Murdoch (Sussex), Messrs. H. Murray-Anderdon and S. M. J. Woods (Somerset), Messrs. H. W. Bainbridge and W. E. Ansell (Warwickshire), Mr. W. Barclay-Delacombe (Derbyshire), Messrs. T. Burdett and G. W. Hillyard (Leicestershire), Dr. Russell Bencraft (Hampshire), and Messrs. C. E. Green and O. R. Borradaile (Essex). The meeting was a private one, but the following details were officially communicated to the Press:—

The original proposition of Mr. Ellison, on behalf of Yorkshire, "That for the purpose of classification there should be no distinction drawn between Counties who play out and home three-day matches with not less than six other Counties," was seconded by Mr. Hillyard, and then withdrawn in favour of the following amendment:—Proposed by Mr. Denison, and seconded by Mr. Murray-Anderdon, "That the M.C.C. be requested to consider and advise upon the whole question of classification of Counties." This was carried unanimously.

It was also made known that, as the result of a meeting of the various captains of the first-class Counties, Lord Hawke had sent in the following resolution signed by himself and Messrs. J. Shuter (Surrey), S. M. J. Woods (Somerset), J. A. Dixon (Notts), F. Marchant (Kent), W. L. Murdoch (Sussex), A. J. Webbe (Middlesex), A. N. Hornby (Lancashire), and W. G. Grace (Gloucestershire):—

"That the matches played by the following four Counties—Derbyshire, Essex, Leicestershire, and War-

Classification of Counties

wickshire—against the counties at present styled first-class, and also against one another and against the M.C.C., should be regarded as first-class matches, and the records of the players engaged in these matches shall be included in the list of first-class averages." Lord Hawke's resolution was afterwards formally ratified by the Committee of the Marylebone Club.

On the 20th of October the Committee of the M.C.C., to whom, as stated above, the whole question of the classification of Counties had been rendered, made the following scheme:—

LORD'S GROUND, N.W., *October 1894.*

The Committee of M.C.C. having, at the request of the leading Counties, prepared a scheme for regulating the County Championship, and that scheme having met with the approval of counties concerned, the contest for the Championship will in future be regulated by it.

The scheme as finally approved is as follows:—

Classification of Counties.

Cricketing Counties shall be considered as belonging to first-class or not. There is no necessity for further subdivision.

First-class Counties are those whose matches with one another, with M.C.C. and Ground, with the Universities, with the Australians, and such other elevens as shall be adjudged "first-class matches" by the M.C.C. Committee, are used in compilation of first-class batting and bowling averages.

There shall be no limit to the number of first-class Counties. The M.C.C. Committee may bring new Counties into the list, may remove existing ones from it, or may do both.

The list for 1895 is as follows:—

Derbyshire.	Lancashire.	Surrey.
Essex.	Leicestershire.	Sussex.
Gloucestershire.	Middlesex.	Warwickshire.
Hampshire.	Nottingham.	Yorkshire.
Kent.	Somerset.	Worcestershire.

The County Championship

The County Championship.

After the close of each cricket season the Committee of the M.C.C. shall decide the County Championship.

It shall be competed for by first-class Counties. No County shall be eligible unless it shall have played at least eight out and home matches with other Counties, provided that if no play can take place owing to weather or other unavoidable causes such match shall be reckoned as unfinished.

In 1896 the number of out and home matches qualifying for the Championship was reduced to six, owing to the Australians' tour, and for 1897 the number was fixed at seven. In 1898, however, all the Counties played at least eight out and home matches, thus complying with the rule as originally laid down.

One point shall be reckoned for each win; one deducted for each loss; unfinished games shall not be reckoned.

The County which during the season shall have, in finished matches, obtained the greatest proportionate number of points shall be reckoned Champion County.

County Championship, Second Division.

The following is the regulation governing the competition :—

Second-class Counties and second elevens of first-class Counties shall be entitled to compete in this division. No County or second eleven shall be eligible for the Championship unless it shall have played at least four out and home matches with other second-class Counties or second elevens of first-class Counties, themselves being fully qualified competitors.

CHAPTER XI

The Laws of Cricket

1. A match is played between two sides of eleven players each, unless otherwise agreed to; each side has two innings, taken alternately, except in the case provided for in Law 53. The choice of innings shall be decided by tossing.

2. The score shall be reckoned by runs. A run is scored—

1. So often as the batsmen after a hit or at any time while the ball is in play shall have crossed and made good their ground from end to end.
2. For penalties under Laws 16, 34, 41, and allowances under 44.

Any run or runs so scored shall be duly recorded by scorers appointed for the purpose. The side which scores the greatest number of runs wins the match. No match is won unless played out or given up, except in the case provided in Law 45.

NOTES.—1. If the batsman should run more than four runs before the ball is stopped by the fieldsman, the number of runs made by the hit is scored.

2. If the batsman should run five or six runs and the ball eventually reach the boundary, four runs only may be added to the score.

3. Before the commencement of the match two umpires shall be appointed, one for each end.

4. The ball shall weigh not less than five ounces and a half, nor more than five ounces and three-quarters. It shall measure not less than nine inches, nor more than nine inches and one-quarter in circumference. At the beginning of each innings either side may demand a new ball.

NOTES.—1. If, in the opinion of the umpires, the ball has been damaged, a new ball can be called for.

2. In Australia a new ball is allowed for at the end of every 180 runs.

5. The bat shall not exceed four inches and one-quarter

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in the widest part; it shall not be more than thirty-eight inches in length.

6. The wickets shall be pitched opposite and parallel to each other at a distance of twenty-two yards. Each wicket shall be eight inches in width, and consist of three stumps, with two bails upon the top. The stumps shall be of equal and sufficient size to prevent the ball from passing through, twenty-seven inches out of the ground. The bails shall be each four inches in length, and when in position, on the top of the stumps, shall not project more than half an inch above them. The wickets shall not be changed during a match unless the ground between them become unfit for play, and then only by consent of both sides.

NOTES.—1. It has been proposed to increase the width of the wickets by another inch by thickening each stump one-third of an inch.

2. No definite weight has been assigned to the bails—the heavier the bails the harder they may be to dislodge: an official weight should be given.

7. The bowling crease shall be in a line with the stumps, eight feet eight inches in length, the stumps in the centre, with a return crease at each end, at right angles behind the wicket.

8. The popping crease shall be marked four feet from the wicket, parallel to it, and be deemed unlimited in length.

9. The ground shall not be rolled, watered, covered, mown, or beaten during a match, except before the commencement of each innings and of each day's play, when, unless the in-side object, the ground shall be swept and rolled for not more than ten minutes. This shall not prevent the batsman from beating the ground with his bat, nor the batsmen nor bowler from using sawdust in order to obtain a proper foothold.

10. The ball must be bowled; if thrown or jerked, either umpire shall call "No ball."

11. The bowler shall deliver the ball with one foot on the ground behind the bowling crease, otherwise the umpire shall call "No ball."

12. If the bowler shall bowl the ball so high over or so wide of the wicket that, in the opinion of the umpire, it is not within reach of the striker, the umpire shall call "Wide ball."

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13. The ball shall be bowled in overs of six balls from each wicket alternately. When six balls have been bowled, and the ball is firmly settled in the bowler's or wicket-keeper's hands, the umpire shall call "Over." Neither a "no ball" nor "wide ball" shall be reckoned as one of the "over."

14. The bowler shall be allowed to change ends as often as he pleases, provided only that he does not bowl two overs consecutively in one innings.

15. The bowler may require the batsman at the wicket from which he is bowling to stand on that side of it which he may direct.

16. The striker may hit a "no ball," and whatever runs result shall be added to his score; but he shall not be out from a "no ball" unless he be run out or break Laws 26, 27, 29, 30. All runs made from a "no ball," otherwise than from the bat, shall be scored "no balls," and if no run be made one run shall be added to that score. From a "wide ball" as many runs as are run shall be added to the score as "wide balls," and if no run be otherwise obtained one run shall be so added.

17. If the ball, not having been called "wide" or "no ball," pass the striker without touching his hand or person, and any runs be obtained, the umpire shall call "Bye"; but if the ball touch any part of the striker's person (hand excepted) and any run be obtained, the umpire shall call "Leg bye," such runs to be scored "byes" and "leg byes" respectively.

18. At the beginning of the match, and of each innings, the umpire at the bowler's wicket shall call "Play"; from that time no trial ball shall be allowed to any bowler on the ground between the wickets, and when one of the batsmen is out, the use of the bat shall not be allowed to any person until the next batsman shall come in.

19. A batsman shall be held to be "out of his ground," unless his bat in hand or some part of his person be grounded within the line of the popping crease.

20. The wicket shall be held to be "down" when either of the bails is struck off, or if both bails be off, when a stump is struck out of the ground.

The Laws of Cricket

The Striker is out :—

21. If the wicket be bowled down, even if the ball first touch the striker's bat or person—"Bowled."

22. Or, if the ball, from a stroke of the bat or hand, but not the wrist, be held before it touch the ground, although it be hugged to the body of the catcher—"Caught."

23. Or, if playing at the ball, provided it be not touched by the bat or hand, the striker be out of his ground, and the wicket be put down by the wicket-keeper with the ball or with hand or arm, with ball in hand—"Stumped."

24. Or, if with any part of his person he stops the ball, which in the opinion of the umpire at the bowler's wicket shall have been pitched in a straight line from it to the striker's wicket and would have hit it—"Leg before wicket."

25. Or, if in playing at the ball he hit down his wicket with his bat or any part of his person or dress—"Hit wicket."

26. Or, if under pretence of running, or otherwise, either of the batsmen wilfully prevent a ball from being caught—"Obstructing the field."

27. Or, if the ball be struck, or be stopped by any part of his person, and he wilfully strike it again, except it be done for the purpose of guarding his wicket, which he may do with his bat, or any part of his person, except his hands—"Hit the ball twice."

Either Batsman is out :—

28. If in running, or at any other time, when the ball is in play, he be out of his ground, and his wicket be struck down, by the ball after touching any fieldsman, or by the hand or arm, with ball in hand, of any fieldsman—"Run out."

29. Or, if he touch with his hands or take up the ball while in play, unless at the request of the opposite side—"Handled the ball."

30. Or, if he wilfully obstruct any fieldsman—"Obstructing the field."

The Laws of Cricket

31. If the batsmen have crossed each other, he that runs for the wicket which is put down is out; if they have not crossed, he that has left the wicket which is put down is out.

32. The striker being caught, no runs shall be scored. A batsman being run out, that run which was being attempted shall not be scored.

33a. A batsman being out from any cause, the ball shall be "Dead."

33b. If the ball, whether struck with the bat or not, lodges in a batsman's clothing, the ball shall become "Dead."

34. If a ball in play cannot be found or recovered, any fieldsmen may call "Lost ball," when the ball shall be "Dead"; six runs shall be added to the score; but if more than six runs have been run before "Lost ball" has been called, as many runs as have been run shall be scored.

35. After the ball shall have been finally settled in the wicket-keeper's or bowler's hand, it shall be "Dead"; but when the bowler is about to deliver the ball, if the batsman at his wicket be out of his ground before actual delivery, the said bowler may run him out; but if any bowler throw at that wicket and any run result, it shall be scored "No ball."

36. A batsman shall not retire from his wicket and return to it to complete his innings after another has been in, without the consent of the opposite side.

37. A substitute shall be allowed to field or run between wickets for any player who may during the match be incapacitated from illness or injury, but for no other reason, except with the consent of the opposite side.

38. In all cases where a substitute shall be allowed, the consent of the opposite side shall be obtained as to the person to act as substitute, and the place in the field which he shall take.

39. In case any substitute shall be allowed to run between wickets, the striker may be run out if either he or his substitute be out of his ground. If the striker be out of his ground while the ball is in play, that wicket which he has left may be put down and the striker given out,

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although the other batsman may have made good the ground at that end, and the striker and his substitute at the other end.

40. A batsman is liable to be out for any infringement of the laws by his substitute.

41. The batsman may stop the ball with any part of his person, but if he wilfully stop it otherwise, the ball shall be "Dead," and five runs added to the score; whatever runs may have been made, five only shall be added.

42. The wicket-keeper shall stand behind the wicket. If he shall take the ball for the purpose of stumping before it has passed the wicket, or if he shall incommode the striker by any noise or motion, or if any part of his person be over or before the wicket, the striker shall not be out, excepting under Laws 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30.

43. The umpires are the sole judges of fair or unfair play, of the fitness of the ground, the weather, and the light for play; all disputes shall be determined by them, and if they disagree, the actual state of things shall continue.

44. They shall pitch fair wickets, arrange boundaries where necessary, and the allowances to be made for them, and change ends after each side has had one innings.

45. They shall allow two minutes for each striker to come in, and ten minutes between each innings. When they shall call "Play," the side refusing to play shall lose the match.

46. They shall not order a batsman out unless appealed to by the other side.

N.B.—An appeal, "How's that?" covers all ways of being out (within the jurisdiction of the umpire appealed to) unless a specific way of getting out is stated by the person asking.

47. The umpire at the bowler's wicket shall be appealed to before the other umpire in all cases, except in those of stumping, hit-wicket, run out at the striker's wicket, or arising out of Law 42, but in any case in which an umpire is unable to give a decision, he shall appeal to the other umpire, whose decision shall be final.

One-Day Matches

48. If either umpire be not satisfied of the absolute fairness of the delivery of any ball, he shall call "No ball."

48a. The umpire shall take especial care to call "No ball" instantly upon delivery; "Wide ball" as soon as it shall have passed the striker.

49. If either batsman run a short run, the umpire shall call "One short," and the run shall not be scored.

50. After the umpire has called "Over" the ball is "Dead," but an appeal may be made as to whether either batsman is out; such appeal, however, shall not be made after the delivery of the next ball, nor after any cessation of play.

51. No umpire shall be allowed to bet.

52. No umpire shall be changed during a match, unless with the consent of both sides, except in cases of violation of Law 51; then either side may dismiss him.

53. The side which bats first, and leads by 150 runs in a three-days' match, or by 100 runs in a two-days' match, shall have the option of requiring the other side to follow their innings.

54. The in-side may declare their innings at an end in a three-days' match at or after the luncheon interval on the second day; in a two-days' match, on the second day, at any time; in a one-day match, at any time.

One-Day Matches.

1. The side which bats first and leads by 75 runs shall have the option of requiring the other side to follow their innings.

2. The match, unless played out, shall be decided by the first innings. Prior to the commencement of a match it may be agreed—that the over consist of five or six balls.

N.B.—The tie is included in the words "Played out."

Single Wicket.

The laws are, where they apply, the same as the above, with the following alterations and additions:—

1. One wicket shall be pitched, as in Law 6, with a

Instructions to Umpires

bowling stump opposite to it at a distance of twenty-two yards. The bowling crease shall be in a line with the bowling stump, and drawn according to Law 7.

2. When there shall be less than five players on a side, bounds shall be placed twenty-two yards each in a line from the off and leg stump.

3. The ball must be hit before the bounds to entitle the striker to run, which run cannot be obtained unless he touch the bowling stump or crease in a line with his bat, or some part of his person, or go beyond them, and return to the popping crease.

4. When the striker shall hit the ball, one of his feet must be on the ground behind the popping crease, otherwise the umpire shall call "No hit," and no run shall be scored.

5. When there shall be less than five players on a side, neither byes, leg byes, nor overthrows shall be allowed, nor shall the striker be caught behind the wicket, nor stumped.

6. The fieldsman must return the ball so that it shall cross the ground between the wicket and the bowling stump, or between the bowling stump and the bounds; the striker may run till the ball be so returned.

7. After the striker shall have made one run, if he start again he must touch the bowling stump or crease, and return before the ball cross the ground to entitle him to another.

8. The striker shall be entitled to three runs for lost ball, and the same number for ball wilfully stopped by a fieldsman otherwise than with any part of his person.

9. When there shall be more than four players on a side there shall be no bounds. All hits, byes, leg byes, and overthrows shall then be allowed.

10. There shall be no restriction as to the ball being bowled in overs, but no more than one minute shall be allowed between each ball.

Instructions to Umpires.

These instructions, drawn up in 1892 by the Committee of the M.C.C., are intended as an appendix to the

Fitness of Ground

Laws of the Game. Some little alteration had to be made in 1901, the decision as to the fitness of the ground and light being now in the hands of the captains; and an important addition with regard to the treatment of the wicket after rain was made in 1902, consequent, no doubt, on the loss of time in the Test Match at Birmingham.

Fitness of Ground.

Law 33. At the commencement of a match, the umpires may be appealed to by either side as to the fitness of the ground for play.

Should they not agree, play will not commence until they are agreed.

In case of interruption from rain, as soon as the rain has ceased the umpires shall, immediately, without further instruction, inspect the wicket, unaccompanied by any of the players, and decide upon its fitness. Should it prove unfit, they shall continue to inspect at intervals until they decide it is fit for play, when they shall call upon the players to resume the game.

The ground is unfit for play when water stands on the surface, or when it is so wet or slippery as to deprive the bowlers of a reasonable foothold, or the fieldsmen of the power of free movement.

The umpires are not to be biassed by the opinions of either side, still less are they to allow themselves to be influenced by the impatience of the spectators for a resumption of the game, and are not to be induced, by the public interest in a particular match, to declare the ground fit for play unless they would consider that ground fit under any circumstances.

Fitness of Light for Play.

The umpires may decide, on appeal, that there is not sufficient light for play. Should the light improve before the time for drawing stumps, they shall, without waiting for instructions, call upon the players to resume the game.

Fitness of Light for Play

In the event of the captains agreeing as to the condition of the ground or light, the umpires will, so far, be relieved of their responsibility.

Law 47. An umpire is only justified in appealing to the other umpire when he is unable to decide, owing to his having been prevented from seeing the occurrence on which the appeal is based. He is not to appeal to the other umpire in cases on which he could give a decision merely because he is unwilling to give that decision. If he be in any doubt, the principle laid down in Law 43, "That the existing state of things shall continue," shall be followed, and, in consequence, the decision should be in favour of the batsman.

Law 48. The special attention of umpires is called to this law, which directs them to call "No ball," unless absolutely satisfied of the fairness of the delivery.

Umpires should not allow themselves to be unduly influenced by appeals from such of the field who were not in a position to form a judgment on the point appealed upon, or by tricks—such as throwing up the ball, on appealing for a catch at the wicket—without waiting for the decision. Umpires, being the sole judges of fair or unfair play, should remember that such devices are obviously unfair, and are not in accordance with the spirit in which cricket should be played.

By order of the Committee of the M.C.C.

June 20, 1902.

In the course of the season of 1899 the following additions to the Instructions to Umpires were approved by the M.C.C. Committee:—

Law 54. "Declaring"—

(a) If a side declare its innings during the luncheon interval, it must do so within fifteen minutes after the commencement of such interval, otherwise an extra ten minutes will be allowed for rolling.

(b) If a side declare its innings closed in the morning before play commences, it must do so in sufficient

Code of Signalling

time to enable the other side to choose the roller it prefers, otherwise an extra ten minutes will be allowed for rolling.

• Code of Signalling.

Boundaries shall be signalled by waving the hand from side to side.

Byes shall be signalled by raising the open hand above the head.

Leg byes shall be signalled by raising the leg and touching it with the hand.

Wides shall be signalled by extending both arms horizontally.

No balls shall be signalled by extending one arm horizontally.

The decision Out shall be signalled by raising the index finger above the head.

Umpires should wait until a signal has been answered by the scorer before allowing the game to proceed.

Besides signalling, the umpire shall "call" distinctly for the information of the players.

On giving a decision, the umpire shall make sure that the batsman understands what the decision is.

Addition to "Instructions to Umpire."

Passed by M.C.C. Committee, June 16, 1902.

(a) Umpires are not justified in deciding the ground unfit for play merely because the grass is wet and the ball would, in consequence, be slippery.

(b) In order to facilitate play at the earliest possible moment in wet weather, the umpires shall see that the foot holes made by the bowlers and batsmen are cleaned out, dried, and filled up with sawdust at any time during the match, although the game is not actually in progress.

